

Lord Wigg's army comrades, do anything to the infantryman except put him in the family way; but, as George Wigg grimly reminded his friend, "only if you let them, Snouder, only if you let them". The extent to which the country's military men are permitted to engage in the most extraordinary eccentricities, not only in organization and administration, but in policies which may affect the lives of everyone in the world, is critically examined in David Owen's *The Politics of Defence*, based on his experience as Minister responsible for the Royal Navy from 1968 to 1970. He ascribes the apparent failure of politicians to do anything about it partly to a phenomenon familiar to anyone who has ever worked at a high level in a service ministry—"the insidious process of military indoctrination, a heady mixture of pomp and secrecy".

This is the process by which the military establishment turns the arrival of any new service minister into the Defence Department into a sort of day of the Triffids, neutralizing him with the subtle poison of flattery and in-group jargon and the seductive lure of clearance for access to "Atomic Top Secret" and other resounding security classifications. The highest compliment which the Chiefs of Staff can pay to a minister is, if the bemused politician only knew it, his certificate of political castration—"he is one of us". No major politician since the war has successfully resisted the intoxication of it all. It is partly because of this that politicians in the defence field are often persuaded to leave important decisions either to their military advisers or to the small number of their colleagues who have taken the trouble to study military matters, on the cynical but sometimes understandable grounds that generals are too busy with politics to devote much time to war. But not all the blame lies with the military and their genius for defusing their political masters. They are aided by the inherent reluctance of many politicians to become involved in what they believe is a subject of arcane and incomprehensible specialization.

Dr Owen, who clearly kept his wits about him during his brief passage through the operations rooms, suggests that it is the politicians who regularly undertake commitments incompatible with resources, and who put forward propositions which are at times dangerous as well as irresponsible. This deplorable state of affairs is aggravated by a mulish

reluctance on the part of the military staffs to accept political guidance in the detailed process of decision making. The result is a system in which service rivalries and the special interests of the military establishment play a disproportionate part in defence decisions. This in itself might not be a serious defect if the system led, in the end, to intelligent and effective defence policies; but there is, regrettably, little evidence that this is so. The British nuclear deterrent provides a classic case history.

Britain's present military posture is based, in effect, on the White Paper presented by Duncan Sandys in 1957. Like most other Defence White Papers, before and since, it was based on a combination of political expediency and military "log-rolling". Its effect was to establish the "independent nuclear deterrent" as the keystone of British defence policy, to bring compulsory national service to an end, and to return to the discredited and dangerous policy of massive nuclear retaliation. Even if the policy made sense in the context of the late 1950s (and it was vigorously criticized even then by many of our European allies) it no longer stands up to the most cursory examination. The political, strategic and technological developments of the past fifteen years have apparently passed unnoticed by the military planners and British defence policy still relies upon a strategic nuclear striking force of questionable credibility and small regular forces without adequate reserves. The super-powers have amassed immense strategic weapons systems, and the Soviet Union, even under the agreement with the United States on the limitation of strategic arms, is deploying ballistic missile defence systems which might quite soon seriously damage the deterrent value of our present generation of Polaris missiles; China has entered the nuclear club and will inevitably aspire to the status of super-power; the Common Market is about to be enlarged, and although the Treaty of Rome has no concern with defence matters, it would be naive to believe that the new Europe will not need to re-examine its defence arrangements with great care.

In a new study commissioned by the Brookings Institution in Washington, John Newhouse and a group of American experts have examined the United States commitment to Western defence and especially the case for a unilateral reduction of American forces in Europe. There is in the United States a growing sense of a significant change in the

European political environment, suggesting that the threat of armed conflict is diminishing. (Although originally a by-product largely of Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik this feeling has recently been reinforced by President Nixon's essays in summit diplomacy and by the announcement of the Russian-American agreement on the limitation of strategic armaments.) There is a perceptible reluctance on the part of the American public to assume greater responsibility for their own defence, which, combined with a suspicion that America's military role in Europe could be adequately discharged with substantially reduced forces, has created a serious dissatisfaction among many responsible Americans at the cost of deploying American forces at the present level in Europe, and with the effects of this expensive military commitment on the balance of payments. There is a feeling that in Europe, as in the Far East, the United States is overstretched and, rightly or wrongly, this is believed to be largely the reason for the failure of the Administration to solve urgent and long-neglected domestic problems. The Brookings experts arrive at a conclusion which will confirm the theories long held by many European observers—namely that any acceptable major revision of the status quo will require movement toward both closer organization in Western Europe and détente at several levels throughout Europe, combined with a limited but clearly perceived identity of interest between the United States and the Soviet Union.

They suggest, in effect, a Western Alliance composed of two groups—North America and Western Europe, not only equal in size but with roughly equivalent responsibilities, as the only way of perpetuating the American military commitment to European defence.

This is a proposition of some significance to this country, since much of the future of British external policy is bound up in the way in which Europe develops as the European Economic Community is enlarged and European political integration progresses from a theoretical concept into a reality. With the end of Empire and the consequent contraction of military power, our foreign policy is once again European-centred and, as Professor Howard says, we are unlikely ever again to have statesmen or strategists who will, like Curzon, believe that the security of Britain can be considered in isolation from that of Europe—East as well as West of the Rhine. British defence policy should

therefore be concerned specifically with defence, that is to say with the security of Europe, and not any longer with the underpinning of a vast colonial Empire or the symbols of super-power status. Military thinking, if it is to be relevant to the new role of Britain in the world, will have to undergo a radical transformation in almost all its aspects, but not least in the field of nuclear weapons.

In a carefully researched study of Britain's attempt at an independent nuclear strategy, Andrew Pierre, once on the staff of the American Embassy in London and now one of the large community of American strategic analysts, has concluded that in the past Britain has been trying simultaneously to remain an independent nuclear power, to maintain a special relationship with the United States, and to become a European power, and that we cannot continue indefinitely this precarious balancing act. He suggests that in the field of nuclear weapons there are six possible courses open to us—we can renounce nuclear weapons unilaterally; make a genuine attempt to achieve real technological independence; renew and perpetuate the dependence on the United States; collaborate with France, the other Western European nuclear power; participate in a European nuclear deterrent; or form part of the European element in a "twin-pillar" reconstruction of the Western Alliance. Of these, unilateralism and dependence on the United States can be ruled out for purely European reasons. The Labour government of 1964 could have renounced Britain's nuclear capability, but the decision not, after all, to "renege" the Nassau Agreement almost certainly marked the disappearance of the last chance—Britain is very unlikely, in the present pattern of European politics, to leave France as the only nuclear power in the European Community.

Similarly the special nuclear relationship with the United States was what kept Britain out of the Common Market through the long years of Gaullist intransigence, and to return to it now would be to raise all the old suspicions that Britain is not, after all, truly European. Technological independence—the achievement of a truly independent nuclear deterrent—is almost certainly beyond our national capacity, especially in the context of the deployment by the Soviet Union of ballistic missile defences, however restricted that may be by the recent Russian-American agreement. It would be ruinously expensive—a disadvantage which

applies equally to the proposal for European nuclear deterrence. In the case of the political implications of nuclear striking force would be formidable even if the idea made any sense—which it manifestly does not. As Dr Owen writes, "There is no merit in divorcing from the existing Alliance a friendly super-power merely in order to pursue the fanciful chimera of nuclear independence."

(He probably meant to write "merit" rather than "chastity" and, although I hope I may have attempted to explain and such impeccable conclusions.) The possibility of Anglo-French nuclear collaboration contains seeds of discord between Britain, Germany, France and Germany, and Western Europe, not to mention the intolerable strains on the fusion and bankruptcy may be the only way to deduce the author's intentions or motives from her creative, inevitably some reader will make connections between the experiences of Virginia Woolf's childhood and youth and the insights and intensities of her novels, but none are made by Professor Bell.

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GRAPHY
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In support of Operation Thursday

DEREK TULLOCH:

Wingate
Edited by Arthur Swinson.
300pp. Macdonald, £3.25.

Wingate's Chief of Staff has surfaced rather belatedly with a full justification of his hero. He himself admits that "the actual writing has been unilluminated", and it certainly cannot be classified as a literary achievement, even by the limited standards of military writing.

Derek Tulloch was a contemporary and friend of Orde Wingate as a cadet at Woolwich and later as a company-subaltern. Wingate's unhappy experiences at "The Shop", which Tulloch describes from personal knowledge, were a strong influence on his already markedly intense and individualist character. They turned him into the fanatic military rebel that he remained thereafter. The intervening years, covering Palestine and Abyssinia, are lightly skimmed over, as Tulloch did not himself experience them and did not come into the picture himself again until he became Wingate's Chief of Staff for the second Chindit operation. It is on the controversies surrounding the planning and preparation for and the execution of "Operation Thursday" that the book concentrates.

Tulloch is indignant at the treatment which Wingate has received from "officialdom." "No British general," he writes, "even the most inept and incompetent, has suffered

such hostile comment by our official war historians and by the military establishment in general as Orde Wingate." Tulloch's fiercest anger is reserved for the late Major General Kirby, author of the official history of the war in the Far East. Slim, Mountbatten and Bernard Fergusson are not far behind in the list of villains. The purpose of the book is to refute them, and Japanese sources are quoted to support Wingate's case and rebut his accusers, to whom the author imputes a number of sinister motives, ranging from mere old-fashioned obstructionism to "a desire to disguise the hopeless muddle, political, strategical and tactical, which the Burma campaign was conducted until September, 1944", and "the official desire to destroy the so-called Wingate 'myth' once and for ever" for fear that emulation of it would shatter the discipline of the army.

The principal weakness of the book (and there are many) is that the author protests too much. There is no doubt that Slim's own *Defeat into Victory* was unfair to Wingate; but Christopher Sykes's *Orde Wingate* was highly favourable, while recognizing that on many occasions, not least near the end, Wingate was open to serious criticism. Mr Sykes is a far more convincing advocate for Wingate than the blindly faithful Tulloch. Re-reading S. Woodburn Kirby's volume with care, there is little doubt that, although naturally inclined towards a view of events as officially recorded, he deals fairly

with Wingate and that his criticisms are well-founded, especially of the exaggerated ideas which Wingate was propounding in February 1944 for the development of his proposed operations, when it became clear that the major offensive campaign in North Burma, agreed upon at the Quebec Conference in August 1943, was not going to take place. Wingate's memoranda of February 10 and 11, 1944, given in full as Appendices 17 and 18 of Kirby's volume three, provide the best evidence possible to support those criticisms.

There is no doubt that Wingate's Chindit operations, and all that went into the preparation and training for them, contributed to a significant degree to the final defeat of the Japanese in Burma, and also to the development of effective methods of waging war in the jungles and mountains of South-East Asia, methods taken for granted after the Second World War in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam. But the ironic fact remains that the contributions were often very different from those which Wingate had originally intended.

Chindit I, disastrous as it appeared to many at the time, proved that British soldiers could master the jungle, exploiting radio and air supply to the limits dictated by their physical endurance. Its main contribution, however, was to alter the Japanese plans by leading them to believe that the jungle-covered mountains west of the Chindwin were a secure barrier neither to themselves nor to the British. This resulted in their de-

cision to mount the offensive into Assam which led to their downfall.

The adoption of glider-borne entry for two of his three brigades in Chindit II and the formation of "Strongholds", as his brigade bases were called, formed no part of Wingate's original plan. They were largely forced on him by the change of circumstances in which the operation was launched and the change of aim which went with it. It was no longer a guerrilla operation and was half-way to becoming a conventional airborne operation behind the enemy lines. In retrospect it appears that a parachute drop on Indaw by the Indian Parashute Brigade (about which Wingate was so contemptuous) would have been far more effective than the unfortunate Ferguson's long, arduous, exhausting and rather pointless march. In this change lay the roots of the real controversy on which Tulloch's book concentrates.

If it is to be taken seriously, it must be balanced by the other view. A combination of Sykes and Kirby provides the right balance. The best comment on Wingate was made in his own words by Mountbatten in reply to a typically outrageous message: "Your astonishing telegram: Mountbatten signalled, 'has made me realize how you have achieved your amazing success in getting yourself disliked by people who are only too ready to be on your side.' The surprising thing is not that Wingate roused opposition—he went out of his way to do so; and indeed it was his malapropos of his be-

haviour, his motive and rationale, but that he managed to retain support both in very places and at other levels.

VIPs gave him their support partly because it suited their own time and, if one is to be truly fair, one must put the primary difficulties at Chindit II which frustrated Chindit II and primarily at Churchill and Brooke, who accepted Wingate's proposals so uncritically as a way of their difficulties at Quebec. Lower mortals bear the burden of dealing with Wingate's frustration when they themselves were movers in undermining the proposals on which the validity of the operation was based.

But we must not blame them much. In the Far Eastern war, inherent contradictions of mind between the different American views and between Chiang Kai-shek and Chenault, and the fact that Teheran relegated Burma to lowest priority in the whole effort were the principal causes. It is little wonder then that Chindit was the only offensive possibility of competing priorities and abilities. One's first sympathy is for the soldiers and airmen who were the playthings of all these pressures. The surprising thing is not that Wingate roused opposition—he went out of his way to do so; and indeed it was his malapropos of his be-

Strange happenings among the Stephens

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Four years later she was at work on a novel called *Melmoth* which, her biographer says: "may indeed have had its beginnings in Virginia's imagination at some earlier date... but it is now that we find it mentioned by name in letters... *Melmoth* was to occupy her for the next five years and to become eventually *The Voyage Out*".

But the development of Virginia as a novelist is not, in this volume, Professor Bell's predominant concern; rather he is recreating her life story and the development of her entire personality up to her thirtieth year. Probably a majority of readers

will turn to this biography either because they are interested in Virginia Woolf as a writer, or because they are interested in the Bloomsbury group; for both kinds of reader Professor Bell provides absorbing and illuminating reading.

It becomes evident by the close of the volume that Virginia Woolf was intellectually and imaginatively precocious, but was late in achieving emotional maturity. This could well be a consequence of tragic happenings and tense relationships in childhood and adolescence, including her own attacks of insanity; contributory also to this delay in maturing must have been her introduction, in her twenties, to the free-thinking

morally experimental group of Cambridge intellectuals. She groped towards self-knowledge in the area of friendship and sex. In these matters she went through the not unusual stages from homo to heterosexual love, but went through them perhaps more than usually late.

This first volume closes when maturity is reached—four years before the publication of her first novel—when she finally recognized the quality of her love for Leonard Woolf and told him that she loved and would marry him. Readers will eagerly await the second volume since in reliability, thoroughness of knowledge, tact and insight in using it, this first volume is masterly.

ingly significant part. The classical foundation then had to bear the structures, romantic and realist, which Bernhard built so superbly upon it.

In her chapter on the repertoire Miss Taranow examines fifty plays taken from the whole range of the actress's career—plays in which she continued to star and also plays she excluded. The selection says a great deal about her art and its frontiers (as do the plays she wrote herself, especially *Adrienne Lecouvreur*). Nothing could be more revealing than the banishment of Ibsen and Corneille and the fidelity to Sardou and Racine. She could be Phèdre or a boulevard heroine (Proust pointed this out in his description of La Berna) and reach the heights in either, just as Irving could be Hamlet or Mathias; but, like him, she could find no place in the different discipline of the new dramatists.

This careful, sophisticated study has many virtues. The author has interpreted her research with a fine sense of the nature of the theatre. Her scholarship is exact and thorough. Her criticism is objective, even dispassionate. The result is a remarkable account of the artistic history of an actress of genius, schooled in an old tradition, who ventured into the widest of theatrical worlds and triumphed. Matthew Arnold was almost certainly wrong about Madame Sarah's intelligence.

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340pp. Oxford University Press.
£5.50.

From Crisis to Crisis is concerned with Pakistan under the constitution devised by its Field Marshal President, Ayub Khan, and ends with his downfall in March, 1969. In an earlier book, *Revolution in Pakistan*, Herbert Feldman dealt with the martial law administration initiated in October, 1958, and in a third volume he proposes to complete the story up to the breakaway of Bangladesh. Mr Feldman is an Englishman living in what was West Pakistan, and has been a close student of political developments there since the partition of the subcontinent. His judgments are severe, supported by quotations from newspapers, radio broadcasts, speeches in legislatures and similar material; and if there is occasional evidence of failure to check detail in this important contribution to contemporary history, it is not significant enough to detract from the total effect. This amounts to a powerful indictment of Ayub Khan's regime.

Although Ayub Khan was widely admired abroad—and not least in this country—as a soldier-statesman of good sense and high intent, it is now accepted that much of what was credited to him was in fact the product of his own efficient public-relations machine. In his own country, however, these advisers finally did him great disservice in launching the Great Decade to mark the economic and political advance of Pakistan under Ayub's guidance. They chose a time when dissatisfaction was beginning to mount all over Pakistan; the economic miracle which the rest of the world applauded meant little to the vast bulk of the people, however much it

meant to the supporters and close relations of Ayub Khan. As the Great Decade's slogans were publicised, which was developing public unrest, which was to culminate in Ayub's first abandoning the constitution on which he had pinned his reputation, and then bowing out of politics to make way for the disastrous entry of General Yahya Khan. All this Mr Feldman traces with an accusing pen; but there are graver charges than those of vainglory and a belief in the power of words to mask lack of achievement.

Mr Feldman blames Ayub Khan for launching in 1965 an invasion to secure Kashmir, thereby starting military operations which left India in a stronger strategic position, put Pakistan at a grave political disadvantage, brought Russian influence into the subcontinent and laid the foundation for Ayub's own departure. Mr Feldman also accuses Ayub of fiddling with the constitution to keep himself in power, of repressive suppression of criticism, of reliance on corruption as a political instrument and in general of betraying the hopes of a nation which welcomed him when he took over power in 1958. There will be many who feel that Mr Feldman, although taking pains to point out their virtues he can find in Ayub's record—such as tenacity in introducing social reforms against religious opposition—has been less than generous to a man who, in the author's words, was conciliatory rather than stern and unrelenting. Some will think that Ayub's foreign policy successes were greater than are here estimated and that his travels were beneficial to his country. The fact that he was not intellectual enough to please President Kennedy seems of little importance compared to the success he achieved in establishing contact with the Russian leaders, even if in the long run Pakistan still ranked

way below India in the Kremlin's lists of favourites.

All that said, however, the explosive events since 1969 could hardly have happened if Ayub Khan had succeeded in his ten years of power in moulding Pakistan into one cohesive unit through the development of democratic institutions. It may seem unreasonable to put all the responsibility on him, but while he was at the top no one else seemed to count at all. Yet the impression persists that while presidents may change in Pakistan, the real power lies elsewhere. This is why Mr Feldman has so much of relevance to say for students of South Asia. Ayub is yesterday's man but many men of importance today figure in his analysis: so do many current situations.

Mr Feldman's observations on relations with India are worth noting. He discounts Pakistani fears of conquest by arms. On the other hand, he recognizes the validity of the fear of economic, intellectual and cultural penetration by India which would make of Pakistan an empty shell and a client state. The failure of Pakistan to build up a cultural unity capable of resisting this is, in Mr Feldman's view, due to as clear a case of *trahison des clercs* as has been seen in this century. In particular, he thinks that the higher cadres of the civil service have failed to recognize the country's need for a sense of cultural solidarity and have failed to contribute to the creation of a free intellectual atmosphere. He does not believe it is possible to throw aside the cultural heritage which developed on the Indian subcontinent through Hindu-Muslim contacts, but sees that there are people on both sides with a vested interest in frustrating efforts at the solution of quarrels. The question is whether quarrels can be more easily mended now that there are no longer two countries but three involved.

Democrats' man

ROBERT SAM ANSON:
McGovern
303pp. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
£3.50.

In some respects *McGovern* is a cut above the usual campaign biography issued in the year of a presidential election. It is more informative and candid about the candidate's early years; there is a welcome lack of idolatry; and some of the Senator's political weaknesses are discussed with frankness. The reader will not, however, find an answer to the most important question raised by the book: what has brought George S. McGovern to the point where he is now the leading challenger for the Democratic candidacy for the presidency?

The political ferment which has pushed McGovern to the top of his party is too formless and chaotic to be susceptible of accurate interpretation. Robert Anson himself is too involved in his subject to judge whether the Senator is the product of an unexpected rush of populism within the party or whether his speeches and record are responsible for the Democrats' manifest drift away from the patterns of the past forty years.

McGovern, to be sure, was chairman of the party's Democratic Reform Commission, an organization which has had a good deal to do with changing the character of the party, if not reforming it. But the party of Roosevelt and Truman, of John F. Kennedy and Johnson entered a period of drastic change as early as 1969; McGovern is the beneficiary, not the initiator of this change.

The Senator represents South Dakota, a state in Middle America where the society and its politics are radically different from those of, say, New York's Westchester County or Wimbledon. The English reader will benefit from Mr Anson's brisk description and analysis of the land and the people that produced George S. McGovern.

This is the first attempt to fill in the background of shabby political deals, undeniable idealism and savage infighting that are part of the McGovern story. Some of it is instructive, little is edifying and the reader is left with the feeling of perplexity akin to that felt after comparing the adroit, rather tricky prairie lawyer of Lincoln's Springfield years and the towering figure of the Civil War.

Senator McGovern has emerged as a national figure, Mr Anson says, not because there is anything new in what he says but because his appeals

to the eternal verities of American life have not been muffled by public for years. Such exaggeration is only just permissible in a campaign biography. Politicians have been saying the same things, sometimes better, often worse, every year.

No, what makes the Senator endearing is his challenge to the tax structure and the military-industrial complex. It also, judiciously observed, Washington note, lowers his appeal in the unions and in the conservative, and until recently, nominally Democratic South.

There is little specific about the challenge in the book, possibly because it was written before McGovern's campaign for the nomination led him to issue it. Instead we have a good deal of diverting but not intrinsically valuable material about "the politics of belief" and copious quotations from the candidate's speeches.

These show a real and deep concern for the average American, a phenomenon associated with election years. They demonstrate his candour and unswerving opposition to the war in Vietnam, although the reader may consider the Senator's prescription for what the United States is to do about South-East Asia after withdrawal rather vague.

Mr Anson's point that his early association with the antiwar issue limited McGovern's overall appeal is well taken. That issue is virtually dead in 1972: what happens after the Americans leave and how Washington handles the immensely complex future of the area are the real temporary issues. The candidate has since become much more interested in such issues as the economy, environment, the tax structure and, of course, defence spending.

Mr Anson does his best to represent his subject as a political general from the outback capable of solving the problems arising from the issues. But he is never able to encapsulate the impression, perhaps unworthy, that there is something of a bit phony about George S. McGovern.

1972 may be the last turnaround we have. If we continue on this present course... under the kind of leadership we've had in recent years, it is open question whether this society will survive.

Those are not the ideas of another Lincoln. Rather they are tragically reminiscent of another ambitious and repeatedly unsuccessful candidate for the presidency, William Jennings Bryan.

Master-mediocrities

JOHN PARKER:
Rhodesia
166pp. Pitman. £2.

As an account of the isolation, and insulation from reality, of White Rhodesians this study could hardly be bettered. John Parker, who went to Rhodesia from Britain and worked there as a journalist from 1954 until his deportation early in 1966, is completely honest about his own slow awakening to the realities of the Rhodesian situation. This makes his analysis of these realities all the more telling. He puts it starkly, but accurately: "The British tradition, so widely trumpeted, of justice and fair play, submerged almost without a struggle and re-emerging as the Nazi tradition of the Master-Race."

Mr Parker exposes the hypocrisy of "partnership" as practised during the Federation. He is justly scathing about the weakness of successive British governments in dealing with the mediocrities who wielded (and still wield) power in Salisbury. He puts in perspective the so-called liberalism of Sir Edgar Whitehead, recording how, to accompany his carols of concession, he used police intimidation. Also, he questions the much-vaunted war record of Ian Smith, and portrays him accurately as a shifty

and strictly limited man who "major political assets are a stubbornness and an inability to understand, let alone answer, outward questions". And, from own experience as a journalist in a country where men, professing to uphold British standards, employ the methods of Goebbels, Parker traces the process by which the broadcasting and television terms of Rhodesia were corrupted by the Smith regime.

Apologists for the Smith regime often accuse its critics of not knowing the country or understanding its problems. Mr Parker knows it well and was for many years professionally involved in examining its problems. His verdict is damning. After reading his account the apologist might ask themselves what ignorance and lack of perception cannot more easily be found among their own ranks.

Gunnar Myrdal's *Asian Drama*, which was the subject of a front-page article on November 21, 1968, appeared in an abridged edition of 350pp. Allen Lane The Penguin Press, £3.50. Seth S. King, with the aid of or assistance, has reduced the original enormous length: no attempt was made to bring the work up to date.

Reasonable revolutionaries

SNOW:
Malcontents
Macmillan. £2.25.

Like C. P. Snow completed a sequence of eleven novels, *Malcontents*, on which his reputation will ultimately rest, is a later volume there was a concern with what is happening to English society in the wider world. The penultimate novel, *The Sleep of Reason*, dealt with the young to accept the standards of their parents, one of the principal themes.

Completion of a work like *Malcontents* and pondering what to do next, a lengthy pause might have been expected, but Snow's appetite for the complexities of modern life is not for the act of writing is undiminished, and *The Malcontents* carries on the arguments begun in *The Sleep of Reason*, except that the young people in that book rejected the power of those in this one virtuously.

Malcontents thus reads very like a twelfth volume in the series with Lewis Elliot left out.

Being one of the major characters has throughout a powerful grip, and it contains those passages of insight into the human mind which stand out as each other's efficient, even Snow's writing. Such a paradox when Stephen, the protagonist, tells his mother of his certainty that he will get something out of her. He is astonished by her personal, unsympathetic response. "How do you get up to get through this?"

High-spirited, was angry; she turned to her, in disappointment, as was empty than disappointment, she expressed on her face. The features were ravaged; her eyes were open, the might have been shut, she shouting at the referee: "The referee, the referee, had gone."

It is as much the reader's as the author's that the hysterical exposure is generally calm, capable of being to just right.

An affair in which Stephen and his friends are concerned is the book. The seven, of themselves "the core", are at the university attached

to an orderly cathedral city, and some of them live in the locality. They have come across a bit of local Rastafarianism, which leads, through an agent to an influential Tory MP, and they are preparing to expose it. Suddenly they learn that the details of their whole operation are known and, more than this, that they must have been made known by a member of the core. The group turn in on themselves, and by argument and discussion try to discover the traitor's identity. Then one of them walks out of a window at a party, perhaps as a result of being given LSD. He dies, an inquiry follows, all their plans are ruined.

It would be wrong to give more details of the developments in a tale which has something of the puzzle interest of a detective story. A similar creation of suspense can be found in *The Masters*, and here as there it is splendidly maintained. Yet it must be said that, as an engine for ordering the action, this exposure of Rastafarianism is far from satisfactory. It is treated with the deliberate vagueness used by Henry James in dealing with the operations of revolutionary conspirators, but one is still left asking questions. Why did it have to be "two weeks and three days" before "the balloon" was "ready to go up", how did the core hope to make the attack stick when so many similar exposures have failed for lack of hard evidence, why should the exposure have been affected by the death of one member of the core and the trial of others on drug charges? To these questions one attentive reader found no answer, except that all this did not really interest the author. The Rastafarianism is machinery used to get the story going, and it is not meant to be investigated too closely.

It is particularly because of this structural weakness that *The Malcontents* cannot be regarded as one of the more important novels, but the characterization of the seven young people also lacks the suppleness and subtlety of Snow's finest creations among dons, scientists and civil servants. The middle-aged or old tend to create the young in their own image, and it is difficult to accept the more intellectual of these young people. The working-class radical contemptuous of student politics and regarding ideas of revolution as "a blink in a middle-class eye" is very convincing, and the Jewish Marxist, the drug-taker who remains throughout on the fringe of the group, and the sexy daughter of a rich surgeon, are acceptable minor figures. It is Stephen, his girl Tess, and their friend Mark, whose purity of motive, often seems pure priggishness, and whose conversation is surely not that

of any young people anywhere, whether Tess is crying out, "It's a pretty dark tunnel to be in", when referring to their situation, or Mark is advising Stephen, "Whatever you do, you must do it in your freedom."

Yet it is possible to make too much of this. It seems likely that Snow knew the chances he was taking in creating such figures of a generation far removed from his own, as James understood the improbabilities he was letting himself in for in putting down on paper the revolutionaries of *The Princess Casanoviana*. And James's eloquent defence against the "probable ironic reflexions on the full licence for sketchiness and vagueness and dimness taken indeed by my picture", might be made in a slightly different form by Snow. He began, it is clear, from the point that the malcontents of his title had to be moved by the attempt to do something good, something that would in a small way improve society, rather than by any personal or purely political motive. Their motivation had to be intellectually reasonable, because in the terms of their creator the use of reason is identifiable with goodness. Grant these assumptions, and characters like Stephen, Tess and Mark are inevitable. One may find them unacceptable, but it should not be thought that they were conceived in a spirit of literal realism, any more than James's much-derided Hymen Robinson. Novelists learn to accept, and to try to use, their own limitations, and that is what Snow has done here.

With this said, it remains true that the finest things in the book are not the pictures of youth, but the relationships of the young and their parents, like that of Stephen and his inhibited, peripheral father; or the hostility built up between Stephen and the conventionally-minded solicitor Hotchkisson, to whom he goes for advice. The brief portrait of Hotchkisson is done with casual brilliance:

Hotchkisson was wearing a suit of heavy ginger tweeds. He was a very big man, heavy-shouldered, thick through the chest. In a doughy small-featured face the eyes were shallowly set with full flesh or underlid beneath them, which gave him an expression assertive and surreptitiously salacious. His voice was strained, husky, and high, such as one sometimes hears in star games players or other massively muscular men.

Scenes like this interview between Hotchkisson and Stephen, or those in which Stephen tries desperately to come to terms with his parents, have a subtlety and depth not excelled by anything to be found in *Strangers and Brothers*.

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Ins and outs of alignment

WILLIAM J. BARNDT:
India, Pakistan and the Great Powers
388pp. Pall Mall for the Council on Foreign Relations. £4.25.

It is impossible not to sympathize with the writer of a book on Great Power involvement in India and Pakistan which ends on the eve of the greatest political upheaval on the subcontinent for a quarter of a century—an upheaval which must have an enduring effect on Great Power positions of influence in the area. William J. Barndt signed the preface to his book in September, 1971; it was published in May, 1972. In an intervening month, Bangladesh was born and the United States suffered a sharp diplomatic setback. This unhappy timing may not damage the main theme of

the book, which is a survey of the role of the world powers on the subcontinental scene during the last twenty-five years, but it inevitably sharpens the critical faculties of the reader.

Indians and Pakistanis will in any case approach the book in a critical frame of mind because Mr Barndt worked for the CIA, albeit in its Office of National Estimates, for fourteen years and if there is one thing Indians and Pakistanis have in common it is a phobia about the CIA. It will however take a particularly suspicious mind to find evidence of sinister underpinnings in Mr Barndt's book. It is a patient and generally objective record of moves on that corner of the international chessboard represented by South Asia and he puts in fair perspective the long-range significance of the United States decision to arm Pakistan in the early 1950s which led almost immediately to the development of a close Indo-Russian relationship and reached its culmination in the signing of a treaty of friendship and cooperation last year. On such matters, Mr Barndt is sound and informative; his approach to strictly Indo-Pakistani affairs is simplistic, however, and the subtleties of the relationship pass him by.

The question whether Russian and American involvement in Indian and Pakistani affairs has been partially helpful or entirely malignant could be debated, but what is beyond argument is that this involvement stems from the Super Powers' concern with each other rather than with the interests of either India or Pakistan. Realization of this was, of course, the mainspring for the Nehru doctrine of non-alignment. It can perhaps now be seen that it was Washington's belief that Pakistan was willing to become part of the pattern of containment of world communism which began the process of destroying non-alignment as a policy for the developing Asian

world. Both India and Pakistan knew that the American arms received through Ceylon were never likely to be used against either Russia or China. Mr Barndt sees this, as did many Americans at the time, but he believes that Washington policy-makers genuinely believed they had found a staunch Muslim ally against communism. On the other hand, he believes that the Russians entered the South Asian scene with the deliberate purpose of exploiting quarrels between the neighbouring states. Yet, as well as advancing her national interest, Russia's policy had a clear ideological content. So, of course, had America's, as was often detectable in matters of aid.

What of the future? Once again, Mr Barndt's speculation is less stimulating than it might have been if he could have included consideration of the latest developments. He thinks that the United States cannot ignore Russian attempts to gain influence in the subcontinent, though it is hard to see now what Washington could do in New Delhi and Dacca to recover lost ground. Mr Barndt favours aid rather than taking sides in quarrels; without economic progress, it is impossible to see a decent future for these countries. "And without this," he says, "there can be no adequate protection of basic United States interests in South Asia." It is probably easier to persuade American policymakers by talk of enlightened moral obligations, but the fact remains that the climate is highly unfavourable for aid-giving.

America, as it is almost everywhere of this kind and is not hopeful that they can America keep a foot in the South Asian door? Apparently only by selective arms shipments. Which is exactly where we came in.

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Down with institutions

IVAN D. ILLICH:

Deschooling Society

116pp. Calder and Boyars. £1.95 (paperback, 95p).

America and its colonies, *The New York Review of Books* tells us, face a crisis. The crisis is composed of a rediscovery of the urban poor, the rediscovery of the Blacks, and defeat in the Vietnam war. Instant diagnosis has led to instant remedy. Most instant remedies do not work instantly. (That is a point that rather needs to be seized.) In *Deschooling Society*, Ivan Illich shows himself at one with other once fashionable cults that flashed across the sky. Sir Peter Medawar, in a memorable piece, showed Teilhard de Chardin to be a confused (though possibly morally admirable) thinker; Professor Alasdair MacIntyre's analysis of Marcuse replaced reverence for a seer by a bleak look at middle. Someone ought to look at Ivan Illich.

Father Illich, people say, is a good man. It is possible that fervour leads to beneficence; the sterner may feel, however, that zeal, indissolubly linked to the philosophy of education, as in the case of Rousseau, is not only bad in itself but sooner or later leads idle hands into mischief.

It is, perhaps, best to begin with a quotation that will illustrate that, whatever else Father Illich may do, he is tuned in to the latest nostrums: The Vietnam war fits the logic of the

moment. Its success has been measured by the numbers of persons effectively treated by cheap bullets delivered at immense cost, and this brutal calculus is unashamedly called "body-count". Just as business is business, the never-ending accumulation of money, so war is killing, the never-ending accumulation of dead bodies. In like manner, education is schooling, and this open-ended process is counted in pupil-hours. The various processes are irreversible and self-justifying.

It would not take long to spell out both the attractiveness, to some, of the rhetoric, and its major fallacies. Father Illich is a theologian who has embraced the theology of Bonhoeffer—that is to say, he no longer believes in the institutionalized church. He learnt his theology at the Gregorian University in Rome, and the brief biography appended to his book needs to be filled in. He was born in 1926 in Vienna. Presumably, therefore, he was in Vienna at the age of sixteen in 1942. He went on to the Gregorian University in Rome. One wonders, at this stage, what his attitude to the Nazis in Vienna was, and what his subsequent political actions were. He spent the early 1950s in the United States; then went to Puerto Rico; and he has since spent much of his subsequent life, it seems, either in Mexico or in the United States. Certainly, his examples are drawn largely from Colombia, and from New York.

Father Illich uses the school as a paradigm of other institutions in

society, embracing everything from the family to the road system. Some might think this a somewhat omnium gATHERUM approach, but certainly he has a point when he suggests that the school is the secular church of today, and that much is expected of it. He is a conventionally liberal and ultimately a reactionary thinker. He embraces the notion that vouchers should be issued to parents who would thereupon promptly make choices for their offspring among schools, and that in the schools, or rather the non-schools, people would either pick up skills or, alternatively, would give themselves a liberal education over cups of coffee, having found like-minded persons by means of a computer-operated telephone system which enabled people to get together to discuss matters of common interest.

Father Illich believes fervently that the market operates perfectly, and he therefore thinks that the sudden expression one morning of the notion that one would very much like to discuss *Sense and Sensibility* with somebody, mentioned over the telephone to a computer, would lead to four like-minded people gathering within a matter of hours in a café on 49th Street, where an amiable, meaningful, and presumably educational discussion would take place. Anyone who has ever tried to get a family from one side of New York to the other, or simply to make a telephone call or go for a walk, will realize that at this stage Father Illich has taken leave of ordinary human relationships and must be relying upon his charismatic quality.

Father Illich's style proceeds by a series of assertions and generalizations, some of which are rooted in

fact, and would not be dissented from by any reasonable person. For example, he suggests that childhood is a comparatively recent invention and that, until quite recently, children were dressed as adults and even hanged as adults. Of course this, while true up to a point, is not wholly true, unless the letters of St Paul are no longer read in the deinstitutionalized church. Basically, what Father Illich is saying is that, just as the church used to require constant attendance at services, confessions and sacraments, and the observation of certain rules, and this has been replaced by a much more equitable and relaxed deinstitutionalized church in which you can do what you like, so it would be better if children did not have to go to school. This belief rests upon three assumptions: that most children do not like school; that a modern society can in fact be run where children do not have to be looked after separately; and that most schools today are actively pernicious. None of these propositions is self-evidently true. This is not untypical of Father Illich's methods of argument. In his attack on childhood Father Illich says that most of us did not enjoy it, and instances Mrs Portnoy's son who, he suggests, would have been happier at work than at school. But is he right? And what about poor Mrs Portnoy herself, one of the most misunderstood mothers in fiction?

Father Illich meanders on about the relationship between teachers and taught, making the points that teachers are not the sole source of information now and never have been; that the teacher regards himself as a priest, which may or may not be true; that the schools operate largely as a system of social selec-

tion, which is certainly true, but always has been. He also suggests that people are increasingly plugging out of society as it is, because of their own feet and in the place of their place among other nations. The nations are undoubtedly to be found among such new nations, and their autonomy as a nation for the first time only in the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

It may be said about the nations of the fact that in the Union, fact remains fact: in the history of the world, it was only the revolution that the Byelorussian language for the first time became an official language of a country. A quite extensive language has been published in the original and in translation. Theatres have been created.

Father Illich is a believer in the isolated man finding his own way to freedom. He suggests that "detach competence from curriculum, inquiries into a man's learning history must be made taboo, inquiries into his political affiliation, lineage, race, and habits, or racial background, nobody should know anything about other people (that is to say, should just react to people as we meet them); and that the destruction of the social institutions as we now know them (the school is but one example) would lead to a freer, more isolated society.

It perhaps would not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that what would be most likely to follow from the destruction of society as we know it would be a new world history, huge colonial empires have always, sooner or later, become the victims of their own enormous, multinational empires. The need to maintain the administrative apparatus, the conduct of wars for the sake of one's frontiers, the putrefaction of revolts in the periphery, etc. Pre-revolutionary movements: on the part of Poles, Finns, Georgians, and others, which undermined the country's independence.

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Home affairs

ELIZABETH JANEWAY:

Man's World, Woman's Place

319pp. Michael Joseph. £2.50.

With the opening chapter of her first work of non-fiction Elizabeth Janeway strikes a note that sounds as clear and precise as a brass instrument against the dithyrambic chorus of Women's Librarians. She is embarking, she says, not on a polemic but on an inquiry. Given the prevailing tone of the movement's literature, one is prepared to be grateful for the mere declaration of intention. When the author goes on to fulfil it, it is an occasion for thanking heaven.

Mrs Janeway's point of departure is an acknowledgment of the fact that

In American society as it is organized at present, the place for many married women during certain years of their lives is in the home, unless they are able to provide satisfactory substitute care. The time it is wise for them to spend at home can be figured as a function of the number and ages of the children for whom they have accepted responsibility.

Thus firmly based in sanity, she goes on to explore the "vast superstructure of myth [which] has been built by emotion, by desire, need or fear" around the core of the difference between men and women. The myth is that of female power, hence female

threat, which is rooted in the mother-child relationship. The Great Goddess, protean as her forms are, is an unconscionable time-dying, and Mrs Janeway, supported by a wealth of illustration from psychology and sociology, shows how, for some time to come, mere rationality is likely to bow down before the terrible logic of instinct when the relative positions of men and women are in question.

Mrs Janeway makes clear also how the situation is exacerbated by the permanent flux of contemporary social structures. When social and occupational roles are becoming less and less clearly defined it is inevitable that any questioning of sex roles, the most fundamental of all, should be fiercely resented; but neither they nor the pattern of feeling which governs them are immutable. Also, since our society is committed to activism, we accept change as something that can be dealt with. Dealing with this particular change will involve constructing, consciously or otherwise, a new social myth to interpret and control our new style of life.

Readers who "don't believe in psychology" may still be impressed by Mrs Janeway's assembling of impeccable historical sources to remind us how very short has been the life-span of the "home" which is, purportedly, the woman's place, and the "family" which inhabits it.

Until the eighteenth century, the concept of the nuclear family of today scarcely existed. In its place was the household, made up of clan, servants, craftsmen, which constituted, in Tawney's phrase, "a working co-operative". For the rich, or at least the substantial, the home was a farm and workshop, and factory, on a greater or lesser scale. For the poor it was merely shelter, often of the most primitive sort. Some of the skills possessed by the women who directed such working households survived into the early years of the present century. It may be that the determining factor in pushing women out into the world when their children no longer need them will be that in the modern home, there is little for them to do; and in the modern world domestic skills will be near-redundant.

The book is very agreeably written; though it is to be expected from a novelist of Mrs Janeway's reputation, but which is far from commonplace in works of sociology.

Mothers without fathers

TONY PARKER:

In No Man's Land

159pp. Hutchinson. £2. Panther. Paperback, 40p.

The tall young woman remained motionless, statue-like in the white linen casket with its gold chain-link belt. Leaning with one shoulder against the wall at the end of the wide sweep of the fourth-floor balcony window, she looked out with dolphin-lum-blue eyes at the pink and grey of the sunset sky, down at its reflection in the dulling water of the lake in the park below.

Can it be serious, you wonder, or are these opening pages intended as parody? The lapse of taste is odd in such a sensitive editor as Tony Parker has proved himself to be, and it would be a pity if potential readers were discouraged, for as soon as the unmarried mothers are allowed to speak for themselves he justifies his reputation as Britain's most expert interviewer. Others have borrowed the technique, but none can rival his skill in catching the painful individuality of different voices, or the way he can give an almost poetic shape to what in other hands would be just a mass of taped material.

This is the art that conceals art. No commentary at all; the reader seems to draw his own conclusions. Yet how often the thought that rises, apparently spontaneously, has been carefully placed there. By what subtle juxtapositions Mr Parker makes these girls reveal the secret workings of their minds, the interaction between past and present.

Six ordinary women, with nothing in common except the fact that they have each borne a child out of wedlock. Nothing? Superficially, perhaps, for the unmarried mothers are obviously selected to provide a contrast of background and personality. But one will soon begin to spot links and spin theories. Relationships with their own mothers, all sound disturbed—either abnormally close or

openly rejecting. Fathers seem curiously unimportant: this is indeed no man's land. Ann, who has lived all twenty-seven years of her life in the same council flat, does not even mention the father of her adored child. All her thoughts are of her dead mother: "I never got the chance to tell her just how ashamed, how sorry I was for all the trouble and worry I'd caused through what I'd done." The trouble was not the birth of her illegitimate daughter, but a minor delinquency in adolescence and her refusal to accept her mother's overture of forgiveness after a savage beating. No doubt the effect is created by skilful editing, but it is psychologically true, none the less.

Most of the women feel they have made a relatively satisfactory adjustment to their abnormal situation: Francesca (of the dolphinium eyes), insulated by family wealth and her deep suspicion of men; Penny, the working-class grammar-school girl who has finally reached a College of Education; Ann, whose only regret is that back trouble prevents her from working on the buses; Sally, happy in two rooms with her babies. All have put aside the possibility of marriage. "I don't want to be possessed in that way as a person," says Sally. "I want to stay as I am, an individual in my own right and who has two children."

Much more disturbing are the other two case studies. "Eleanor Kramer", American, twice-married, educated but near psychotic, lives with her little boy in furnished rooms at the back of a dilapidated London house. Furniture is padded—"so Joey can't hurt himself when he crawls around"; the oil-heater burns in midsummer—"It's very important for him always to have an even temperature"; and Tony Parker must keep his voice down—"because otherwise Joey won't get his right amount of sleep". The conversation is punctuated by

her anxious attentions to Joey. Doctors have lost patience with constant demands for reassurance. But "just the other night I screamed and screamed at him maybe for ten minutes without stopping. I should have real hard and chucked him down in his cot and that made him cry the more." It comes as no surprise to hear that newspaper reports about "morbid fascination" for her. This is the stuff of which baby-baiters are made.

With some dramatic sense, Tony Parker reserves till last the story of Edna O'Brien if she were so unmistakably real. Kate, who reads hair and lovely Irish voice speaks from the page, remembers her Connemara pony, telling how she was banished to an exclusive convent where her great fear was that she might be persuaded of a vocation to become a nun, when she knew her vocation was to be a mother. But the Church wins after all, and when becomes pregnant by a middle-aged friend of her father's, she is whisked into a Catholic mother-and-baby home and later, bemused by drugs, tricked into signing away her child. Well, that is how she sees it. Angered by Mr Parker, it is a tall trick the eyes of the most hardened adoption caseworker.

It all adds up to an appeal—powerful because unspoken—women without husbands to be encouraged to keep their babies. For of these six find in their children the deepest satisfaction they have experienced in life; for a fifth the loss of her son is a constant and bitter pain; the opposing argument, if stated? The answer must be no, then Mr Parker makes no claim to describe a random sample. It is to be read as literature, not as research. Anyone looking for a balanced collection of evidence on the merits of adoption will be disappointed, but as an aid to imaginative understanding it is magnificent.

It perhaps would not be too much of an exaggeration to suggest that what would be most likely to follow from the destruction of society as we know it would be a new world history, huge colonial empires have always, sooner or later, become the victims of their own enormous, multinational empires. The need to maintain the administrative apparatus, the conduct of wars for the sake of one's frontiers, the putrefaction of revolts in the periphery, etc. Pre-revolutionary movements: on the part of Poles, Finns, Georgians, and others, which undermined the country's independence.

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Viewpoint

BY JOHN WILLETT

OF ALL THE THINGS my generation is guilty of—I'm on the brink of one of my fifty-five birthdays, so such thoughts come gloomily to mind—the one I feel worst about is the terrible mess we are making of our towns, villages, streets, houses, down to the last detail. I'm an addict of modern architecture, and Corbusier for me is one of the greatest geniuses of the twentieth century, but nearly everything that we do in the name of re-planning and redevelopment (when, by the way, did that word "development" crawl out from under its stone?) seems more or less disastrous. Centre Point, which considered purely as architecture is by no means bad, will surely rank as the monument to this age, just as the pointlessly demolished Euston Arch was that of the railway age and the less pointlessly demolished Stalin statue in Budapest that of People's Democracy. Undemolished, there it stands, a huge cenotaph commemorating present-day values: inflation, self-interest, office expansion, and the evasion of public responsibilities. Foreign visitors please note. In another fifty years they will find it in their history books, symbolizing our time.

To get the proper flavour of 1972 in this country one needs to skip a lot of the main "news" and nearly all the overblown comment that is the papers' misguided answer to the telly, and instead to use one's eyes or leaf through the daily pages. Both are depressing pastimes. With the pound floating like some dead green whale, the city reporters describe the "dynamic", even "glamorous" process of demolishing laboriously built-up industries in order to "develop" their hand and buildings, by putting up still more empty offices, vandalized car-parks and half-dead shopping centres. It's not just the loss of the workers' jobs that matters in such cases; in a firm like Tri-Ang (to take a recent example) there are skills that will perhaps never be developed again, and once they disappear the things our children play with will be that much the less worth having. It is these skills that must go down the drain as our more traditional firms are unpicked by smart city operators or humanely killed off as lame ducks. Up, then, with property, catering, gent's clothing, pop records and other ephemeral money-spinners; down with the heavy industries on which our quondam greatness was based. Aggressiveness, perhaps for the first time in civilized history, has become one of the acknowledged virtues, and it is the aggressiveness of the motorway driver, aggressiveness at our own expense.

This lament may seem a far cry from architecture, but we are, still too narrow in our ideas of that art, which is for better or worse a form of social engineering. The house is a machine for living in, said Corbusier (or words to that effect), and what he meant was not just that architecture shapes living but that living shapes architecture.

The two things are interlocked, so that our cities—and for that matter our countryside—bear the visible imprint of a million and one supposedly non-architectural activities that have gone on there over the years. This is what is so often forgotten in municipal or governmental arguments about what buildings and areas are worth preserving. The standards of conservation are still academic ones, treating buildings as so many specimens, like pictures hung on the wall rather than expressions of a community's character. What matters, however, is not the only original clerestory north of the Thames (or what have you) but the thousands of undistinguished buildings which have come to express some aspect of national or local life which is still active in them: e.g. to take purely literary examples, both the BM Reading Room and the Museum Tavern.

Three weeks ago in *The Listener* there was an excellent essay (originally a Radio 3 talk) by J. M. Richards on the Piccadilly Circus plan. Where people such as Richards and Gordon Cullen are worth their weight in gold is that they combine revolutionary architectural ideas—revolutionary to the older generation, that is—with a real sensitivity to the way people live and move in cities, and how buildings both reflect and shape this. I would be surprised, for instance, if they were entirely happy about any plan for the Museum under which the Tavern, and Craddock and Barnard, and Bryce's bookshop, and Davenport's joke emporium (where I recently bought the last of the early twentieth-century flicker-books) all had to go while St George's church alone was saved. But it is just the likelihood of this that shows Richards's proposal for some form of socialized redevelopment of Piccadilly (by the state, the GLC or even deplorable Westminster) to be too optimistic. What has made architects currently so unpopular is that it is they, as well as the developers and the politicians, who seem prepared to sweep away old forms of living in favour of new ones that suit people much less well. Better the state and its appointed architects than Sir Charles Fortis and Mr Harry Hyams. But only just.

So what can be done? I would suggest a new category of grading for preservation purposes: buildings contributing irreplaceably to local character or social life. I would specifically nationalize all theatre sites, since at present there is nothing to stop these being redeveloped as offices as soon as their leases fall in, so that the London theatre's present renaissance is only too likely to be cut short. And I think more should be done to keep all the threatened redevelopments before the public eye at once: not just a scare about Piccadilly one week, then about Covent Garden the next, as is the way of the media at present, but a grand global picture of the proposed changes to London, complete with

motorways, the Seifert schemes both sides of the Thames at Blackfriars, the big brewers' modernization plans, information about stages and timing, and addresses of the relevant conservation bodies or protest groups. May I offer this (as a birthday present) to Penguins, or *Time Out*, or the Architectural Press itself, any of which could make an admirable job of a compendium on these lines?

Another book which demands to be written—or perhaps it is not so much a book as a way of literary research—is a dispassionate study of the traditional recipes for box-office success, whether in the theatre, the novel or the film. I've always been intrigued by this in an ignorant sort of way, and just lately two experiences have come along to remind me what a fascinating subject it could be. One was the very well acted revival of *Journey's End*, now on at the Mermaid Theatre, a play which combines a deeply traumatic theme—young English officers in the First World War—with sometimes quite shallow theatrical contrivance.

I think I see what makes this so powerful today; it is the combination of a tightly enclosed setting (the dug-out) with our awareness, sharpened by the awful disasters that in our own time have befallen other people, that the battles of the Western Front were the one comparable ordeal of the British middle class. We are justifiably uneasy about the sheltered life we lead—didn't our last Prime Minister say that the most unpleasant experience of his term in office was being shouted down in a Brighton church when reading the lesson or preaching the sermon or giving the absolution or the benediction or whatever it was?—so to discover an extreme situation so close to home, yet faintly alienated by period conventions and language, is very exciting, especially for the young. It also seems pretty acutely observed. And yet without the contrivance, the unlikely, the comic relief, the managing of moves and the balancing of characters it could well have fallen flat.

My second reminder is some remarks by P. G. Wodehouse about the genesis of his marvellous Mulliner stories. One of English literature's many debts to its senior novelist is that, unlike other successful authors, he is prepared to discuss the mechanics, including the financial mechanics, of his craft. In this case it seems that he had noted down a whole set of new ideas for stories, but simply could not think how to make them attractive to the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* until he suddenly thought up the garrulous Mr Mulliner and the cosy circle at the Angler's Rest. From that moment they went like a bomb. So what one would like to know—future Wodehouse PhD students please note—is what the stories were like as originally conceived, and just what was done to them in the workshop to make them go. Then we could tell, perhaps, whether such operations were really to be dismissed as packaging, marketing, so much commercial flummery,

or represented genuine improvement and concentration such as might undergo by the most serious minded work of art.

I am all for sneering at the box office if you can afford to, but I do not think you can do this—morally, I mean, rather than financially—unless you understand just what that makes the cash-register tick. Perhaps the writing schools do to do this, though I have never seen anyone who has subscribed to one but the academics notably do not, and I cannot really see why. The rules are just as hard to establish as those of more avant-garde forms of writing (which both writers and critics have far more freedom to invent as they go along) and a good deal harder to practise; we may tend that they are not, but they really are very few highbrow writers who can write a first-class potboiler. Brecht for one could not, as can be seen from his efforts to break Hollywood script-writing—and who find they can, like Doris Sayers, tend to go on. Well, I would like to see established then, is the difference between those rules which are merely formulae for pleasing the cash tomlor—like putting a comic mess in your novel "Hand in hand together they walked into the sunset"—and those which are equally valid on an artistic level.

This is partly because at present so many seriously-intentioned writers break down through lack of competence and finish, while the fact that the critics play down these factors gives the authors a false self-satisfaction and leads them to dismiss the public as uncomprehending idiots. But polish, technique, economy, variety, timing: virtues these, which are not at all easy to acquire even for the successful boiler, are essential ingredients of any great work of art, and the guarantee against their abuse is to ignore them but to learn how when to use them.

Beyond this there is the ever-debated question of the artist's social role. I see for instance that at Round House two weekends there was yet another call (this time in the name of Anglo-Chinese Understanding) for art to give the people what it wants. But, of course, in society the only measure of what the box-office. Admittedly there are distortions created by middlemen which prevent this from being a perfect guide, but it would be illuminating to study how far it differs from the criteria used in socialized societies (such, indeed, as China).

I think we would find that a lot of the basic rules were international, that potboilers were potboilers in all world round and that commercial interests, when you came down to it, interpreted the needs of the people very much as did the cultural bureaucrats of the Communist Party. Certainly there is more in common between the artistic principles of the Soviet leaders and those of the late Sam Goldwyn than either side would care to think.

RICHARD HOGGART

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The great fixer

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A. J. P. TAYLOR:
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Months one of the few really original intellects in contemporary history, Taylor's biography of Beaverbrook is a masterpiece of writing, lucid, witty, and always interesting. In the other side of the coin there are Mr Taylor's prejudices which are formidable, and there is the factor of his complete devotion to Beaverbrook. Some observers of the war and post-war period found it puzzling, but no one who knew him found it at all surprising. The book is a masterpiece of the art of the biographer, and the last years could be a fair and objective assessment.

How are we to test these precepts against the unfolding narrative of Beaverbrook's extraordinary career and the development of the portrait of his perplexing personality? Beaverbrook was a child of the 19th century, and so understanding of his complex character can begin without appreciation of the importance of

this fact. For always, beneath the surface, there lay apprehension and feelings of guilt. His literary style was heavily dominated by the Old Testament, but this was not the only consequence of early influences. Two other characteristics appeared more dominant at the time, an innate love of mischief and an enjoyment of taking money—but with the latter came a rigorous integrity. In his early years he rose to considerable wealth, and made many enemies, but in the fiercely competitive world of Canadian finance his implacable sense of business rectitude was as important as his survival and success as a politician of eye and movement. "I did not make situations," he once remarked, "I turned them to account." This was a somewhat over-estimated assessment, as Mr Taylor amply demonstrates.

Then, in 1910, the young Max Aitken arrived in England, already a millionaire; he quickly became a close friend of Bonar Law, and entered Parliament. Eyebrows rose sharply, but in reality Aitken's friendship with Law was absolutely complete. Mr Taylor handles their relationship perfectly, and emphasizes both its obviousness and its complexities.

Having entered Parliament, Aitken's interest in the House of Commons ended. He was not a man much given to hearing others talk, nor greatly interested in making prepared speeches to such an audience. "I am not at all interested in wasting time in futile opposition to Radical measures in the House of Commons," he wrote bluntly to the Party Chairman. His passion was for political "fixing", and no eye was more penetratingly turned upon the leading personalities in the political melange.

The first coup, and it was a devastating one, was his role in the unexpected accession of Bonar Law to the party leadership in 1911. This role was characteristic. He was the man who, above all others, propelled Law firmly into the vacuum created by the animosity between those groups in the party who favoured either Austen Chamberlain or Walter Long. Perhaps Law would have taken his stand if Aitken had not been there to stiffen and steady him, but it seems unlikely. In the tangled story of the Irish Question between 1912 and 1914 he acted as intermediary, as the go-between who attempted to achieve compromise, and it was he who brought Law and Asquith together at his home for three meetings. The attempt failed, but the episode gives a sharp insight into the real calibre of "the little Canadian adventurer". At the time, very few people knew of this; they saw the façade, and the majority were repelled.

Already the principal aspects of his personality could be discerned. His quick intellect made him soon bored, and he was constantly embarking upon new ventures, or thinking of doing so; he was essentially solitary and self-reliant although sharp and determined, he was in reality not a hard or ruthless man, but peculiarly vulnerable, often hesitant and unsure of his course; he was generous to all who were in difficulties, a real foul-weather friend, but less interested in the successful and eminent; and he took much glee in his role of go-between, intermediary, and "fixer". He was a highly erratic husband. And, virtually by accident, he had entered into the world of newspapers.

In the letters, writings, and actions of the young Max Aitken in 1914 we see the essential character of the subsequent Lord Beaverbrook. Yet he was, and was always to be, an elusive man, an enigma even to those who had come to appreciate his qualities; only his enemies found him a simple man to categorize, and they did so to their subsequent profound misfortune.

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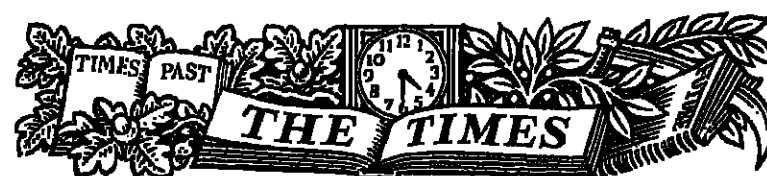
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Viewpoint

BY JOHN WILLETT

OF ALL THE THINGS my generation is guilty of—I'm on the brink of one of my fifty-five birthdays, so such thoughts come gloomily to mind—the one I feel worst about is the terrible mess we are making of our towns, villages, streets, houses, down to the last detail. I'm an addict of modern architecture, and Corbusier for me is one of the greatest geniuses of the twentieth century, but nearly everything that we do in the name of re-planning and redevelopment (when, by the way, did that word "development" crawl out from under its stone?) seems more or less disastrous. Centre Point, which considered purely as architecture is by no means bad, will surely rank as the monument to this age, just as the pointlessly demolished Euston Arch was that of the railway age and the less pointlessly demolished Stalin statue in Budapest that of People's Democracy. Undemolished, there it stands, a huge cenotaph commemorating present-day values: inflation, self-interest, office expansion, and the evasion of public responsibilities. Foreign visitors please note. In another fifty years they will find it in their history books, symbolizing our time.

To get the proper flavour of 1972 in this country one needs to skip a lot of the main "news" and nearly all the overblown comment that is the papers' misguided answer to the telly, and instead to use one's eyes or leaf through the city pages. Both are depressing pastimes. With the pound floating like some dead green whale, the city reporters describe the "dynamic", even "almonorous" process of demolishing laboriously built-up industries in order to "develop" their land and buildings, by putting up still more empty offices, vandalized car-parks and half-dead shopping centres. It's not just the loss of the workers' jobs that matters in such cases; in a firm like Tri-ang (to take a recent example) there are skills that will perhaps never be developed again, and once they disappear the things our children play with will be that much the less worth having. It is these skills that must go down the drain as our more traditional firms are unlicked by smart city operators or hungrily killed off as lame ducks. Up, then, with property, catering, girls' clothing, pop records and other ephemeral money-spinners: down with the heavy industries on which our quondam greatness was based. Aggressiveness, perhaps for the first time in civilized history, has become one of the acknowledged virtues, and it is the aggressiveness of the motorway driver, aggressiveness at our own expense.

This lament may seem a far cry from architecture, but we are still too narrow in our ideas of the art, which is for better or worse a form of social engineering. The house is a machine for living in, said Corbusier (or words to that effect), and what he meant was not just that architecture shapes living but that living shapes architecture.

The two things are interlocked, so that our cities—and for that matter our countryside—bear the visible imprint of a million and one supposedly non-architectural activities that have gone on there over the years. This is what is so often forgotten in municipal or governmental arguments about what buildings and areas are worth preserving. The standards of conservation are still academic ones, treating buildings as so many specimens, like pictures hung on the wall rather than expressions of a community's character. What matters, however, is not the only original clerestory north of the Thames (or what have you) but the possibly undistinguished buildings which have come to express some aspect of national or local life which is still active in them: e.g. to take purely literary examples, both the BM Reading Room and the Museum Tavern.

Three weeks ago in *The Listener* there was an excellent essay (originally a Radio 3 talk) by J. M. Richards on the Piccadilly Circus plan. Where people such as Richards and Gordon Cullen are worth their weight in gold is that they combine revolutionary architectural ideas—revolutionary to the older generation, that is—with a real sensitivity to the way people live and move in cities, and how buildings both reflect and shape this. I would be surprised, for instance, if they were entirely happy about any plan for the Museum under which the Tavern, and Cradock and Barnard, and Bryce's bookshop, and Davenport's joke emporium (where I recently bought the last of the early twentieth-century flicker-books) all had to go while St George's church alone was saved. But it is just the likelihood of this that shows Richards's proposal for some form of "socialized" redevelopment of Piccadilly (by the state, the GLC or even deplorable Westminster) to be too optimistic. What has made architects currently so unpopular is that it is they, as well as the developers and the politicians, who seem prepared to sweep away old forms of living in favour of new ones that suit people much less well. Better the state and its appointed architects than Sir Charles Forte and Mr Harry Hyams. But only just.

So what can be done? I would suggest a new category of grading for preservation purposes: buildings contributing irreducibly to local character or social life. I would specifically nationalize all theatre sites, offices at present there is nothing to stop these being redeveloped as offices as soon as their leases fall in, so that the London theatre's present renaissance is only too likely to be cut short. And I think more should be done to keep off the threatened developments before the public eye at once; not just a scare about Piccadilly one week, then about Covent Garden the next, as is the way of the media at present, but a grand global picture of the proposed changes to London, complete with

motorways, the Seifert schemes both sides of the Thames at Blackfriars, the big brewers' modernization plans, information about stages and timing, and addresses of the relevant conservation bodies or protest groups. May I offer this (as a birthday present) to Penguins, or *Time Out*, or the Architectural Press itself, any of which could make an admirable job of a compendium on these lines?

Another book which demands to be written—or perhaps it is not so much a book as a way of literary research—is a dispassionate study of the traditional recipes for box-office success, whether in the theatre, the novel or the film. I've always been intrigued by this in an ignorant sort of way, and just lately two experiences have come along to remind me what a fascinating subject it could be. One was the very well acted revival of *Journey's End*, now on at the Mermaid Theatre, a play which combines a deeply traumatic theme—young English officers in the First World War—with sometimes quite shallow theatrical contrivance.

I think I see what makes this so powerful today; it is the combination of a tightly enclosed setting (the dug-out) with our awareness, sharpened by the awful disasters that in our own time have befallen other people, that the battles of the Western Front were the one comparable ordeal of the British middle class. We are justifiably uneasy about the sheltered life we lead—didn't our last Prime Minister say that the most unpleasant experience of his term in office was being shouted down in a Brighton church when reading the lesson or preaching the sermon or giving the absolution or the benediction or whatever it was?—so to discover an extreme situation so close to home, yet faintly alienated by period conventions and language, is very exciting, especially for the young. It also seems pretty acutely observed. And yet without the contrivance, the unities, the comic relief, the managing of moves and the balancing of characters it could well have fallen flat.

My second reminder is some remarks by P. G. Wodehouse about the genesis of his marvellous Mulliner stories. One of English literature's many debts to its senior novelist is that, unlike other successful authors, he is prepared to discuss the mechanics, including the financial mechanics, of his craft. In this case it seems that he had noted down a whole set of new ideas for stories, but simply could not think how to make them attractive to the editor of the *Saturday Evening Post* until he suddenly thought up the garrulous Mr Mulliner and the cosy circle at the Angler's Rest. From that moment they went like a bomb. So what one would like to know—future Wodehouse DPhil students please note—is what the stories were like as originally conceived, and just what was done to them in the workshop to make them go. Then we could tell, perhaps, whether such operations were really to be dismissed as packaging, marketing, so much commercial flummery,

or represented genuine improvement and concentration such as might undergo by the most self-minded work of art.

I am all for sneering at the box office if you can afford to, but I do not think you can do this—meaning I mean, rather than financially—unless you understand just what it is that makes the cash-register tick. Perhaps the writing schools do not do this, though I have never seen anyone who has subscribed to one but the academics notably do not, so I cannot really see why. The rules are just as hard to establish as those of more avant-garde forms of writing (which both writers and critics have far more freedom to invent as they go along) and a good deal harder to practise; we may pretend that they are not, but the really are very few highbrow writers who can write a first-class potboiler. Brecht for one could not, as can be seen from his efforts to break into Hollywood script-writing—and those who find they can, like Doris Sayers, tend to go on. What I would like to see established then, is the difference between those rules which are mere formulae for pleasing the cash customer—like putting a comic mess copern in *Journey's End*, or finishing your novel "Hand in hand together they walked into the sunset"—and those which are equally valid on any artistic level.

This is partly because at present so many seriously-intentioned works break down through lack of competence and finish, while the fact that the critics play down these factors gives the authors a false self-satisfaction and leads them to dismiss the public as uncomprehending idiots. But polish, technique, economy, variety, timing: virtues like these, which are not at all easy to acquire even for the successful potboiler, are essential ingredients of any great work of art, and the guarantee against their abuse is to ignore them but to learn how to use them.

Beyond this there is the ever-deepening question of the artist's social role. I see for instance that at Round House two weekends ago there was yet another call (this time in the name of Anglo-Chinese Understanding) for art to give the people what it wants. But, of course, in our society the only measure of this is the box-office. Admittedly there are distortions created by middlemen, which prevent this from being a perfect guide, but it would be illuminating to study how far it differs from the criteria used in socialized societies (such, indeed, as China).

I think we would find that a lot of the basic rules were international, that potboilers were potboilers the world round and that commercial interests, when you came down to it, interpreted the needs of the people very much as did the cultural hierarchs of the Communist Party. Certainly there is more in common between the artistic principles of the Soviet leaders and those of the late Sam Goldwyn than either side would care to think.

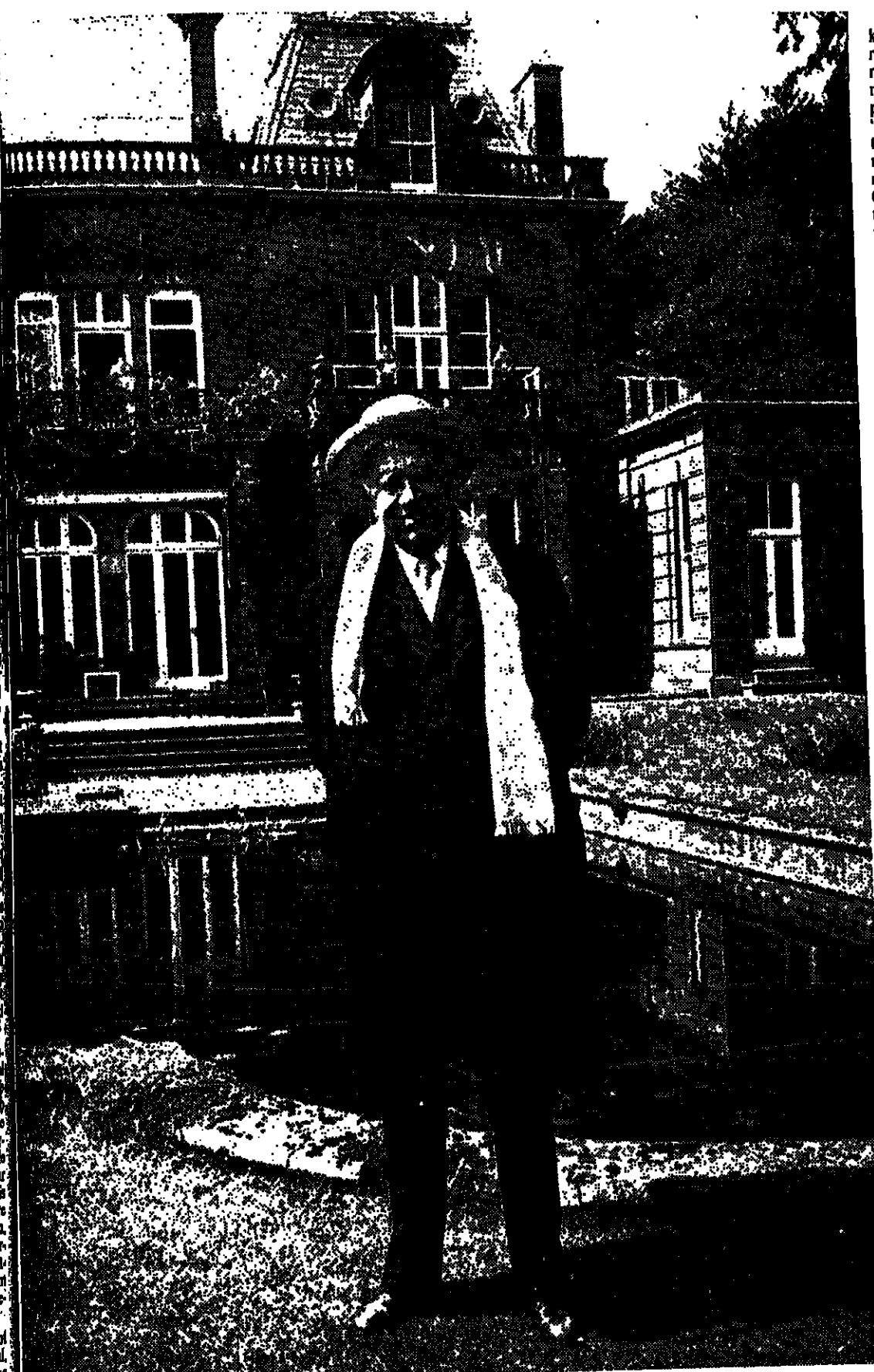
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Lord Beaverbrook, just before his 83rd birthday, at Cherkley, his Surrey home.

The great fixer

A. J. P. TAYLOR:
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main one of the few really original intellects in contemporary history—often idiosyncratic, frequently iconoclastic, sometimes wrong-headed, occasionally very wrong indeed, but always interesting, always provocative and always exciting. On the other side of the coin there are Mr Taylor's prejudices: there are his formidable, and there is his factor of his complete devotion to Beaverbrook. Some observers of this warm and profound friendship found it puzzling, but no one who knew both men found it at all surprising. The nagging question is whether the friend and companion of the late years could be a fair and objective biographer.

How are we to test these apprehensions against the unfolding narrative of Beaverbrook's extraordinary career and the development of the portrait of his perplexing personality? Beaverbrook was a child of the Maude, and no understanding of his complex character can begin without appreciation of the importance of

this fact. For always, beneath the surface, there lay apprehension and feelings of guilt. His literary style was heavily dominated by the Old Testament, but this was not the only consequence of early influences. Two other characteristics appeared more dominant at the time, an innate love of mischief and an enjoyment of making money—but with the latter, a rigorous integrity. In his early rise to considerable wealth he made many enemies, but in the fiercely competitive world of Canadian finance his implacable sense of business rectitude was as important as his survival and success as his quickness of eye and movement. "I did not make situations," he once remarked, "I turned them to account." This was a somewhat over-estimated assessment, as Mr Taylor's demonstrations.

Then, in 1910, the young Max Aitken arrived in England, already a millionaire; he quickly became a close friend of Bonar Law, and entered Parliament. Eyebrows rose sharply, but in reality Aitken's friendship with Law was absolutely complete. Mr Taylor handles their friendship perfectly, and emphasizes both its obviousness and its complexities.

Having entered Parliament, Aitken's interest in the House of Commons ended. He was not a man much given to hearing others talk, nor greatly interested in making prepared speeches to such an audience. "I am not at all interested in wasting time in futile opposition to Radical measures in the House of Commons," he wrote bluntly to the Party Chairman. His passion was for political "fixing", and no eye was more penetratingly turned upon the leading personalities in the political maelstrom.

The first coup, and it was a devastating one, was his role in the unexpected accession of Bonar Law to the party leadership in 1911. This role was characteristic. He was the man who, above all others, propelled Law firmly into the vacuum created by the animosity between those groups in the party who favoured either Austen Chamberlain or Walter Long. Perhaps Law would have taken his stand if Aitken had not been there to stiffen and steady him, but it seems unlikely. In the tangled story of the Irish Question between 1912 and 1914 he acted as intermediary, as the go-between who attempted to achieve compromise, and it was he who brought Law and Asquith together at his home for three meetings. The attempt failed, but the episode gives a sharp insight into the real calibre of "the little Canadian adventurer". At the time, very few people knew of this; they saw the façade, and the majority were repelled.

Already the principal aspects of his personality could be discerned. His quick intellect made him soon bored, and he was constantly embarking upon new ventures, or thinking of doing so; he was essentially solitary and self-reliant although sharp and determined, he was in reality not a hard or ruthless man, but peculiarly vulnerable, often hesitant and unsure of his course; he was generous to all who were in difficulties, a real foul-weather friend, but less interested in the successful and eminent; and he took much glee in his role of go-between, intermediary, and "fixer". He was a highly erratic husband. And, virtually by accident, he had entered into the world of newspapers.

In the letters, writings, and actions of the young Max Aitken in 1914 we see the essential character of the subsequent Lord Beaverbrook. Yet he was, and was always to be, an elusive man, an enigma even to those who had come to appreciate his qualities; only his enemies found him a simple man to categorize, and they did so to their subsequent profound misfortune.

Then, the war. Aitken became the virtually self-appointed voice of Canada in Britain and Aitken the natural publicist and appreciator of propaganda had emerged. But he remained also the fixer, the go-between, and the one-man liaison team between the Canadian Government and London.

The formation of the First Coalition in May 1915 owed very little to Aitken, who was in France at the time, but Asquith's downfall in December, 1916 was another matter. It was, he later claimed, "the biggest thing" he had done, and has been related in *Politicians and the War*. Mr Taylor's description of how this extraordinary book was prepared, and why parts of it should be approached with caution, cannot be faulted. Mr Taylor is right in his more modest estimate of Aitken's importance in the crisis than that which Beaverbrook subsequently claimed. "If Aitken triumphed, this was due to the mistakes of his adversary, not to his own skill. This often happens in life."

One result of the crisis was the most strange of all; Aitken found himself in the House of Lords. His own version portrays him as a helpless victim of a series of misunderstandings; his biographer is unimpressed with this version, and the documents fully justify his scepticism.

Aitken went very willingly to the Lords, despite the King's displeasure. He was already embarked upon his career as newspaper proprietor, having just acquired control of the *Daily Express*. And all this within six years of arriving in England.

In the Lloyd George Coalition Beaverbrook's role was initially that of conciliator and middle-man, and

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For its first appearance in the English language near the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the word "history" looks back to a Greek word for judicious inquiry and forward to a universal word for narrative entertainment. Any historian worthy of the name must be both an inquirer of facts and a teller of stories. That is the point that H. G. Wells was making when he called Thomas Hardy's *The Dynasts* "another instance of the close affinity of the great novelists to the interpretative historian". He could have said the same thing about himself, but he hardly needed to do so, for no one could read *The Outline of History*, here republished in a revised edition, without making the point for himself.

As an historian, Wells belongs among the great storytellers. Characteristically, the historians to whom he turns for his copious quotations are almost invariably dedicated amateurs, like himself, never held an academic post: Gibbon, Prescott, Motley, Carlyle. To the same category belong his favourites from the ancient world (Herodotus and the Evangelists) and among his own contemporaries (Lytton Strachey and Sir Mark Sykes). These were all compulsive storytellers, not scientific experts. In some cases Wells even goes beyond them to the writers of fiction themselves, for as he says of a novel about inter-war Germany—Hans Fallada's *Little Man, What Now?*—there are "books in which the novelist outdoes the historian in his presentation of an atmosphere in which and because of which, things happen". He could also, on the other hand, be severely scornful of romantic novelists who tried to reconstruct historical pictures of the past. Sir Walter Scott, for example, "is a figure whose enormous contemporary prestige will perplex posterity". More surprisingly, he includes Byron in the same condemnation.

But although primarily an imaginative storyteller himself, Wells also demands to be judged as a scientific historian. He calls Herodotus and Aristotle to witness that the "first great idea" is that of science, "using the word science in its widest and properest sense, to include history and signify a clear vision of man in relation to the things about him". It may be noted in passing that to call something a science is to imply the possibility of prediction; but this point belongs to later chapters.

The early chapters of the *Outline* give many straightforward examples of Wells's genius for imaginative illumination of the bare facts of scientific palaeontology. It would be impossible to improve the succinct poetic precision of the opening of his chapter on "Life and Climate": "Wherever the shore line runs there was life, and that life went on in and by and with water as its home, its medium and its fundamental necessity." The same light of scientific imagination is sustained throughout the early chapters, down to the superb "crescendo and diminuendo of frost and snow in the Pleistocene", when "the Age of Mammals" culminated in ice and hardship and man.

With the appearance of man, it becomes possible for the first time to assess Wells as an historian in the strict sense. He has, of course, like any historian, his preconceptions, not to say prejudices. His hero is the common man, but he recognizes that the common man is usually the object rather than the subject of history. In ancient times, as Wells puts it, He went on cultivating his patch, loving his wife and children, beating his dog and tending his beaver, grumbling at hard times, fearing the increasing magic of the gods, desiring little more except to be left alone by the powers above him.

He was at the mercy of events: both natural events, such as geological and geographical changes, and human events, such as the impact of great men. The first identifiable event in Wells's story is the eruption of the Atlantic Ocean into the Mediterranean Sea through the Strait of Gibraltar. The first great man named as such is Sargon I in the third millennium BC.

The whole story

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The middle-class graduate

Wells was not exactly a ready-made champion of the common man, though he saw himself in that guise in all his major novels, from *Kipps* to *Mr. Brilling*. Sociologically he was something of a sportsman. His parentage lay on the borderline between the working class and the lower middle class. Both his father, a cricket professional and shop-keeper, and his mother, as a lady's maid, at least came into contact with the gentry, even if at a deferential level. Wells himself, by a tenacious pursuit of education, graduated into the intellectual bourgeoisie.

He soon acquired the unconscious habits of thought of the middle class. The son of the failed tradesman and lady's maid would otherwise hardly have written of Late Palaeolithic man, having taken natural phenomena for granted "as a child takes its mental times and its gustatory salience"; for in the impoverished and chaotic household of his own childhood there was no nursery staircase and probably no regular meal-times. On the other hand, in his views on ethics and religion Wells remained classless; and the dominating emotion of his life and writing was a reasoned compassion which could only be directed towards the class he had left.

His special greatness as an historical artist lay in his ability simultaneously to individualize and generalize the experience of the common man. He would write of problems common to all ages and every quarter of the globe, while seeming always to have particular, identifiable human beings in mind. The majestic sweep of his generalizations may offend professional historians, but the essential rightness of them has an irresistible appeal for ordinary readers. Thus he writes, summarizing his views of the ancient Mediterranean world:

H. G. WELLS:

The Outline of History

Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind

Revised by Raymond Postgate and G. P. Wells

1,103pp. Cassell. £5.75.

So by the beginning of the third century BC we find already arisen in the western civilization of the Old World three of the great structural ideas that rule the mind of contemporary mankind. . . . The rest of the history of mankind is very largely the history of these three ideas of science, of a universal righteousness, and of a human commonwealth spreading out from the minds of the rare and exceptional persons and peoples in which they first originated, into the general consciousness of the race, and giving first a new colour, then a new spirit, and then a new direction to human affairs.

Two millennia later he delivers a progress report on the development of these great and fruitful themes. He finds the highest achievement of the eighteenth century, embodied particularly in the constitution of the United States, to lie in the transition of the concept of the state from "a community of will to a community of obedience"; obedience not to an arbitrary monarch but to a general will or a social contract.

Moving forward a century and a half, he inevitably finds the generous optimism of earlier chapters disappointed, but he does not give way to more pessimism. Admittedly he did so in his last, and little essay called *Mind at the End of Its Tether*. But that is not the mood of the *Outline*, which recognizes the persistence of intractable problems—defined briefly in the modern world as those of property, currency and international relations—but refuses to regard them as permanently insoluble. These ideas are all elaborated at a very exalted level of abstraction. Yet it is always their impact on the common man that concerns Wells; and again and again he brings them down to that concrete level with a telling phrase. His remark that "Louis XVI was hardly gifted enough or noble-minded enough to be Franklin's valet" summarizes alike Wells's attitudes to political systems and his own experience of ordinary life. It also shows where he stands between the great and the common man.

Like Tolstoy, Wells believed that the role of great men in history was exaggerated; or rather, he had his own conception of greatness. Much as he admired Carlyle, he rejected the idolatry of the Hero, and his catalogue of fallen idols is a long one. It includes, for example, David and Solomon, Philip and Julius Caesar, Muhammad, Charlemagne, Charles I of England and Louis XIV of France, Napoleon, Bismarck, and Wilhelm II of Germany. There are others whom he dismisses as unimportant failures rather than bad men, from Tutankhamun in spite of his treasures to President Wilson in spite of his League of Nations. But this is not to say that he has no heroes of his own, only that their qualifications are different: Buddha and Christ, Loyola and Voltaire and Robert Owen. The basis of his judgment is clearly defined by his remark that "in the long run, Roger Bacon is of more significance to mankind than any monarch of his time". A handful of rulers nevertheless pass the test: Asoka, Jenghis Khan, Akbar, Abraham Lincoln.

It might be suspected that part of Wells's prejudice is directed simply against the intellectual and political environment in which he was born and educated. There is some truth in the suspicion, which becomes more unmistakable as his story approaches modern times. His personal outlook was liberal and agnostic, but at the same time ecumenical. He looked forward to the federation of mankind, and therefore abominated imperialism. Although he regarded history as fundamentally the history of ideas (especially applied ideas, in the form of technology and socialism), he had little interest in religion, and least of all in the established religion of his own country. It is surely significant that while he admired Christ but had no regard for Christianity, he despised Muhammad but approved Islam. To a certain extent the contrast can be explained by his own statement that "we are trying to write as if this book was to be read as much by Hindus or Moslems or Buddhists as by Americans and Western Europeans". It may also be partly because he certainly knew much less about Islam than he thought he did about Christianity. But there is still more to the matter than that.

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On the side of the oppressed

Being the champion of the common man, Wells detested imperialism as much as domestic tyranny. He saw Christianity, as it had developed in Europe, not altogether unjustly as the seed-bed of Western imperialism. There was, of course, some defective vision here as well as great oversimplification. Wells failed to see Islam as a conquering religion only because it had long ceased to be such before his own time.

He equally failed to see Soviet communism as a new form of imperialism because he died in 1946. There is an interesting contrast, which the new edition makes no attempt to gloss over, between Wells's own flattering picture of the Soviet Union in the 1930s trying to build up resistance to Nazi Germany and the postwar account of Stalinism in the later chapters added by Raymond Postgate. There can be little doubt that Wells would have revised what he originally wrote, if he had lived. He was on the side of the communists only so long as they were social outcasts. Similarly, he was on the side of Christ but against Muhammad because the Son of Man had nowhere to lay his head and died on the Cross, whereas the Prophet of Allah was a successful businessman and military leader.

A similar streak of quixotry runs through many of Wells's judgments. The oppressed and despised, whether men or habits or ideas, always command his sympathy against those who oppress and despise them. He praises Carthage because he abominates the Roman Empire. He admires the nomads of Central Asia much as Rousseau admired the Noble Savage, though he also pertinently points out that there is all the difference in the world between primordial man and the lower tribes of today. His sympathy extends to the Huns and the Mongols as well as (to compare small things with great) to the pygmies. In the context of European history he has a soft spot for the schoolmen and the alchemists simply because their attitudes to philosophy and science have been too thoroughly discredited. He has boundless faith in American democracy, partly because it represents the first successful disruption of modern imperialism, but partly also, no doubt, because he did not live to witness the traumas of Vietnam and Black Power.

Although he regarded history as embracing also the role of the prophet, Wells's own vision did not reach as far into the future as he would have liked to think. If he had been a professional historian, of course, he would not have tried to extrapolate from past and contemporary

experience at all; but he was a prophet, and he did, sometimes with a blinding naivety. To him the oppressed nation was the common man writ large; therefore once nations ceased to be oppressed, a stage in the advance to the millennium would have been completed. It scarcely occurred to him that the ex-oppressed might become oppressors in their turn: Boers and Jews, Asians and Africans and even Americans, not to mention Russians and Chinese. He would not contemptuously: "Why should a state want a strategic frontier unless it contemplates war?" But there is no evidence that he ever put that question to the Czechs or the Greeks; nor did he stay for an answer.

A good example of his shortsightedness is the case of South Africa, which had begun to falsify his theories in his own lifetime. After blaming the British for becoming involved in the Boer War, he concludes that

the strain of that adventure produced a sufficient reaction towards decency and justice to reinstate the Liberal Party in power, and to undo the worst of that mischief by the creation of a South African confederation.

The Union of South Africa, as its name makes clear, was not a confederation: that was in fact what Cecil Rhodes (one of Wells's *betwixt*) wanted but did not live to achieve. Had it been so established, it would have been much more difficult for the nationalist governments of South Africa to impose the policy of apartheid (a word which Wells probably did not live to hear pronounced). It is as certain as any hypothetical proposition can be that Wells would have detested the Afrikaner nationalists who took power in South Africa from 1948. It is less certain whether he would have recognized in them the same virtuous Boers whom he and his fellow-liberals so ardently championed half a century before.

Wells indeed was at heart a Don Quixote. He gave another notable example of his rather potent naivety in 1940, at the time of Dunkirk, when King George VI called for a day of national prayer. Days of national prayer, said Wells, were ridiculous survivals of superstition. In his experience, they were invariably followed not by manifestations of divine mercy but by dreadful catastrophes. He was, of course, wrong in his forecast of the outcome; but that is not the point. The point is that it was superstitious to believe that a day of national prayer would lead to a merciful consequence; it was also superstitious to believe that it would lead to a catastrophic one. Like other intellectuals at the time, Wells was wrongly hugging his pessimism to him—the pessimism which he had so brilliantly and briefly exposed in *The Croquet Player* shortly before the war—and he could hardly bear to have it shattered.

The problem of perspective

Yet, to his credit, the one thing he could not do was conceal his prejudices. They are open and unaffected, like his style. There is no pretence of academic detachment about his attitude to injustice and those who perpetrated it. When he writes about Ireland, for instance, his blood boils and his pen seems steeped in blood. On no character in the whole *Outline* does there fall such a cataract of righteous indignation as on Sir Edward Carson. His appointment to the Coalition government in 1915 was due to "the moral pressure of Mr Asquith". He was replaced by "his associate in the Ulster sodition", F. E. Smith; and "gross insult was never offered to a friendly people". Even when Carson was promoted to the judicial bench, he did his best, in spite of the decaying tonary to judges, to keep alive the spirit of violence and bloodshed in Ulster. However justifiable, these attacks seem to give disproportionate importance to their subject, and to betray a lack of perspective in a work of such monumental scale.

Perspective was indeed one of Wells's most intractable problems. More than once he draws attention to the problem of scale. "Half the

history

of human civilization and says to all its chief institutions . . . to be found before Sargon I". . . . Of the early millennium, . . . the sense of immense intervals of time, while in the later centuries . . . is continually apologizing for . . . details much more significant than the misconduct of Carson, . . . as early as the Crusades, . . . the writer of an Outline . . . must ride his pen upon . . . through this alluring field . . . sometimes it is with relief that he . . . on, particularly when he . . . upon an area of theological . . . At other times he "will . . . tax the reader's patience", or he

JOHN KURTEN:

From the Apes

Ed. Gallancz. £1.75.

There is nothing new in the title of this book. *Not from the Apes*, for it is exactly what Darwin wrote, . . . years ago, and no competent biologist sees any reason to disagree with his conclusion. It is odd, therefore, . . . and the publishers claiming in the catalogue that "In non-technical terms, Dr Kurtén sets out to show that Charles Darwin got it wrong". This is not quite fair on Darwin, who makes no such criticism of Darwin, but tries to formulate . . . propositions, the first of which . . . that the ancestry of man on one . . . and that of apes on the other, . . . have been separate for more than 35 . . . million years. This means that . . . the common ancestor of the . . . and the Pongidae over 35 . . . million years ago, in the Eocene . . . epoch.

Dr Kurtén's second proposition is

The rise of reason

EDMUND BERTERMAN (Editor):
Index on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century
Vol. LXXXIII and LXXXV.

Ed. Schwab, W. E. Rex, J. Lough:
History of Diderot's Encyclopédie
Volume II: 345pp. £9.80.
Volume III: pp346-679. £9.50.
Volume LXXXIV. 273pp. £7.50.
Volume LXXXV. 298pp. £6.

Ed. Mandeville House, near Basingstoke, Hampshire: The Voltaire Foundation.

The latest volumes of *Studies on Voltaire* are among the most useful of the series. Two of them (Vols. LXXXII, LXXXVI) carry forward the inventory of the *Encyclopédie* to Volume Ten of that work. This requires over 40,000 dictionary entries, all set forth in meticulous detail, which gives some idea of how vast the enterprise is. When completed, it will number among the greatest of the many contributions to eighteenth-century scholarship made by the *Studies* since they began nearly twenty years ago.

The main weakness of the *Studies* has been their uneven quality, the frequent resorting often with work that would have been better left unpublished. Here, too, this latest volume is encouraging. There is little to be said about the article on Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, confused in argument by largely jejune, and several other side may be counted not only as useful pieces of solid scholarship, but also a number of general points that set off fertile speculation.

The common field of cultural studies is to unite these synoptic studies, which range in content from the purely sociological to the purely philosophical. A pair of essays by Norman Hampson (Vol. LXXXVII), sets out to do this as papers at the

admits that he cannot gauge the significance of complex events. Of the whole great work of the world insists upon itself". It is therefore bound eventually to be realized in practice: so Wells argued in his optimistic days. It was no doubt the discovery that this doctrine led only to endless wars that accounted for his later pessimism. But even that pessimism did not dim the radiance of his artistic genius and humanity, which he shared with a very few contemporaries in his own country—perhaps only Bertrand Russell and Winston Churchill.

The durability of Wells's work is not in question. What may more reasonably be asked is whether it

Horrabin, has holdily embodied in a map of Europe) that "the natural political map of the world insists upon itself". It is therefore bound eventually to be realized in practice: so Wells argued in his optimistic days. It was no doubt the discovery that this doctrine led only to endless wars that accounted for his later pessimism. But even that pessimism did not dim the radiance of his artistic genius and humanity, which he shared with a very few contemporaries in his own country—perhaps only Bertrand Russell and Winston Churchill.

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Are the apes descended from us?

that "hominids are not descended from apes, but apes may be descended from hominids". If this were true, it would mean that the common ancestor of man and apes was already a hominid, thirty-five million years ago, when the Primates were represented by the Prosimians. Anthropologists will require convincing evidence of this, because they have inclined to the view that the common ancestor of man and apes was represented by a form like the twelve-million-years-old *Dryopithecus* whose molar teeth, the "Dryopithecus pattern", recurs both in man and in the modern apes.

The author is aware that his conclusions clash badly with those derived from researches on the structure of molecules of haemoglobin, fibrin-proteins, and the number and shapes of chromosomes in man and living apes, and serological precipitin tests of their bloods, from which quantitative estimates of affinity can be made. To these techniques be-

tween man, chimp, and gorilla in the genes of the ABO blood-group system. These researches and estimates of the time required for changes in genes and molecular structures indicate very recent dates, only five million years, for the common ancestor of man and chimp-gorilla. As Dr Kurtén says, "there is something wrong here", and he cuts the knot by insisting that only the evidence provided by palaeontology has any value. He even goes so far as to say of the resemblances in molecular structure, blood-sera, genes and chromosomes between man and apes, "that they reflect degrees of affinity in descent is simply a hypothesis". He therefore dismisses them as nothing but instances of parallel evolution: "the special similarities found between men and living apes have no other possible explanation". The importance of the morphological evidence provided by palaeontology will not be denied by any biologist, but to sweep away the results of molecular biology in so cavalier

will prove to be, as Thucydides hopefully but justifiably said of his own, "a possession for ever", or disappear eventually from the public consciousness, like Buckle's *History of Civilization in England*. Buckle was once perhaps even more celebrated than Wells: he was quoted, according to Chekhov, by illiterate Russian serfs. But nobody, literate or not, quotes him today.

It is a disquieting precedent, and it must be said that Wells's editors (this son and Raymond Postgate) have done him no service by adding chapters to bring the story up to date. Their merits as continuators may be greater than Xenophon's as the continuator of Thucydides, but it is of

little interest to hear how Wells might have regarded the postwar world if it cannot be known from Wells himself. The implication of the new edition is that the *Outline* must be continually expanded until one day the accretions exceed Wells's own work, which would be absurd. If it is to survive, it must stand on its own, and rest exclusively on Wells's peculiar genius. No one can tell how he would have adjusted his perspective or revised his judgments; and except in point of factual correction, no one should try. The next edition of the *Outline* should not be longer but shorter than the present one. It should stop where Wells's hand was stayed, perhaps fortuitously, in 1939.

read what Darwin actually wrote (they seem to decrease in number) know that he regarded the most important aspect of selection as that which resulted in increased propagation by those individuals that benefit from favourable variations. What is that but "selective fertility"?

British readers likely to be interested in this book can be relied on to know the generally accepted names of the glaciations of the Ice Age in Europe: Donau, Günz, Mindel, Riss, and Würm; but what are they to make of Elsterian, Saalian, Weichsel II, Weichsel III, and an equally fearsome list of names for interglacials? And what will they think when the book, which has been "science" up to page 166, suddenly becomes science fiction when the author speculates what the new selection pressures will be when man has colonized Mars and the moon permanently, and perhaps reached planets in other solar systems?

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Public words and private motives

ODON VON HORVÁTH:

Gesammelte Werke

Volume 1: Volksstücke und Schauspiel. 645pp.

Volume 2: Komödien. 645pp.

Volume 3: Lyrik, Prosa, Romane. 514pp.

Volume 4: Fragmente und Varianten. 688 plus 52pp.

Volume 5: Exponés, Theoretisches, Briefe, Verse. 688 plus 52pp.

Edited by Dieter Hildebrandt, Walter Hinder and Traugott Kirschke.

Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM48 each.

TRAUGOTT KIRSCHKE (Editor):

Materialien zu Odon von Horváth.

212pp. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp. DM6.

Odon von Horváth was born in Fiume on December 9, 1901, the son of a Hungarian diplomat and his Austrian wife: he grew up in Belgrade, Budapest, Munich, Bratislava and Vienna, did not write his first German sentence until he was fourteen, was awarded the Kleist Prize, Germany's highest award to a playwright, when he was thirty, and died in Paris on June 1, 1938. For more than three decades most of Horváth's works have been out of print. This is the first collected edition and many of his works appear here for the first time. No German writer, not even those Jewish authors whose works were burnt by the Nazis (Horváth was, by their standards, a "gentile"), had been so severely served by his publishers before this admirable *Gesammelte Werke*.

It has come just in time, for Germany's younger generation of theatre directors and producers has taken to Horváth with a vengeance. There can be no doubt that informed German opinion ranks him today as the one playwright of the Weimar Re-

public whose work has steadily gained in relevance. There may be many reasons for this, but perhaps the most striking is his iconoclasm, his total freedom from the influences that shaped most other dramatists of the age. Even Brecht, who rebelled against these tenets, was torn by his opposition to them. Horváth, however, is a completely self-made playwright. That he wrote only novels and short stories during the last years of his life was the result of exile, of being barred from all theatres that might have performed him in his own language. Then why was he not translated? Why were his plays not performed abroad? Because Horváth is essentially untranslatable. His strength derives from a semi-idiomatic prose style that seems exceedingly simple and yet makes its impact entirely by breaking the conventions of German metre, rhythm and syntax. Only those thoroughly familiar with *spoken* German can appreciate the extent to which Horváth makes his points by subtly deviating from the norm.

Horváth's one aim—on which all his work pivots—was to expose the contradictions between words and motives, to reveal by linguistic dexterity so complex as to defy analysis what people thought and felt when their lips were saying something else. If this had been merely a matter of unmasking hypocrisy, it might not have been so devastating. But Horváth was concerned not so much with the way people were hiding their motives from others as the way they were lying to themselves. And since Horváth employed a deceptively simple urban idiom, preferably Viennese or Bavarian, his aims eluded many of his listeners and most of his critics.

Willful and contrary as he was, he termed his best plays *Volksstücke*, folk plays. To grasp the implications of this we must recall that Germany, at this period, still thought of herself as the country of "Dichter und Denker". The *Volksstück*, the dialect play written and performed by provincial players, frequently addressed primarily to rural audiences, therefore ranked at the bottom of the literary canon. Yet Horváth could look back on a series of distinguished predecessors who had tried to employ popular forms as vehicles of social criticism: Reuter in Pomerania, Ludwig Thoma in

Bavaria, Raimund, Nestoy and Anzengruber in Austria. But their technique was lighter, more obviously comic in intent. If Horváth had any direct ancestors, they were the same as Brecht's—Lenz and Büchner. As a result, some passages, especially in Brecht's earlier work, could have been lifted bodily out of Horváth's two masterpieces, *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* and *Kasimir und Karoline*. And yet two playwrights of more widely different aims could hardly be imagined.

Though Horváth's heart, as with most dramatists of his time, pulsed firmly on the left, he was no Marxist. He was, in fact, not even an intellectual. And it would probably be no slight on him to say that he was not even very "clever". His political statements, his attempts to grasp the world intellectually, seen in the fore-words to his plays, are so naive that one wonders how a man of such restricted mental equipment could write plays of such depth, insight and complexity. But, as one of the many women who had loved and admired Horváth said, he "wrote with his guts".

Few German writers have ever been more lovingly remembered by their friends: Horváth's entire life seems one long anecdote. He had a way of answering unpleasant questions with remarkable savagery. When, during the dawn of the Nazi age, someone wanted to know precisely whether he was Hungarian or German, he replied: "Bavarian, chum. Know what a Bavarian is? A cross between a Tyrolean and a pimp." When someone asked him why he did not answer, he said he was sick: "Found a mountain cabin full of frozen beer. Thawed it up and swigged it all. Jaundiced."

He felt uncomfortable in the company of intellectuals, spending most of his time in the twilight world of wretched inns and bars, in the dance-halls of the poor, at fairgrounds, among whores and pimps, in the mean holes where the fittest of a dying civilization gathered. He never went to the theatre except out of courtesy to a friend, preferring the cheap movie-houses of the suburbs, where he sat through endless runs of crime films, some of them dozen times, or more. He was proud of the loyal friends he had among six-day cycling champions, prizefighters, all-in wrestlers and racing drivers. A first-rate conjurer, he entertained his

friends for hours with card tricks and other sleight of hand. Extremely superstitious, he consulted astrologists, fortune-tellers and palmists wherever he went. He never rode in an elevator and believed fervently in ghosts. Since he usually worked at night and slept during the day, he would regale his friends at breakfast (which was their lunch or dinner) with minutely detailed, drily precise accounts of the ghosts he had met during the night and the conversations he had had with them. Klaus Mann was terrified of him because he was sure that these encounters had really taken place.

Before Horváth went to Paris, where he was to die, he consulted a gypsy who told him he was about to face the greatest adventure known to man. During the last weeks of his life he told many of his friends that he knew the end was near. Since he was a huge, strikingly healthy man of barely thirty-seven, a great eater of good meals and a healthy drinker of good wines, this invariably provoked bursts of laughter. On the last day of his life, he insisted that his friends stay with him wherever he went. But since Hertha Pauli, with whom he was staying, had fallen asleep after lunch, he did not want to disturb her and left her a note saying that he was going over to see Robert Siodmak about a film project. On his way through the park to the Théâtre Marigny, a thunderstorm came on and broke a branch off a chestnut tree. It struck Horváth, who was killed instantly.

A man who had lived and died in this fashion naturally attracted legends. Brecht, who knew his work intimately, having obtained copies of even the unpublished plays, made a point of never mentioning him in conversation or writing—considering him, of all his contemporaries, the only one that could not be outquoted. Carl Zuckmayer, the third of the three major playwrights whose work has survived the Weimar Republic—loved him like a young brother. It was on Zuckmayer's urg-

ing that he was awarded the Kleist Prize. The volume of *Materialien* contains much information about Horváth's life and friends. Most interesting are the letters from the woman who knew him well—Wera Liesch, Hertha Pauli, Grete Fischer, Ljilja Ljuch— for Horváth was the kind of man who could confide only in women. In his work there is a subtle difference between the female characters and the empathy that makes his women come alive. They may be weak and often foolish, but they are never as corrupt and hypocritical as his men. But here again one must guard against simplification: a writer of such startling ambiguity as Horváth not only attacked folly and corruption but also stood in awe of them. His best play, which he called *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, bore the strange motto: "Nothing gives us so great a sense of infidelity as vacuity."

The editors of the present edition have served Horváth well. Of the carefully annotated and handsomely printed volumes the third and fourth deserve particular praise. For while the plays and novels were known at least to those readers who had made the effort of digging ancient copies out of libraries, some of the stories, most of the poetry, and all of the work-notes are new. Anyone who had previously thought that Horváth's anti-intellectualism and the deceptively easy flow of his dialogue were products of a "natural" talent that needed no more than a tabular paper, pencils and a jug of red wine will be confounded by the exceptionally careful planning these working notes reveal. An excellent analysis of this is supplied by Karl Kahl in the *Materialien*, a volume marred, however, by an extraordinary terminological note, in which Peter Handke tries to elevate Horváth to the expense of Brecht. Anyone who has known both men can imagine what they would have thought.

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